A CRITIQUE OF

HINDUISM

by

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Tarkateerth

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Translated by

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

It may naturally appear as an adventure for one, without any adequate grounding in the subject, to have rushed to translate a work on Hinduism by one of the ablest authorities on it; and therefore may demand a word of explanation. Attracted by this profound analysis of one of the oldest religions, I entertained the idea that it would be excellent if it could be made available to a wider section of the public than that to which it was accessible in Marathi, in which it was originally published. Translation, however, is an extremely difficult task for a variety of reasons, the main one probably being it's demand for a complete identification with the spirit of the author. It is even more difficult for one who can hardly claim more than just a glimpse of the subject. I would, therefore, never have dreamt of undertaking the task but for the constant encouragement I received from the author, and his ever helpful presence to advise, to modify and to correct the endeavour. All shortcomings, defects or weaknesses in this attempt, are however, entirely mine.

Ramnarayan Ruia College
Bombay, March 1, 1948. G. D. PARIKH.

PREFACE TO THE MARATHI EDITION

I am deeply thankful to the University of Nagpur and to the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Advocate Kedar, for extending me an invitation to deliver these lectures on the Criticism of Hinduism and for subsequently publishing them.

Hinduism has been subjected to criticism in these lectures with the aid of historical and sociological methods. This criticism may not appeal to many educated Hindus; on the contrary, to some of them it might appear as a new heresy, undermining the influence of religion. I have not been, however, guided in this criticism by the dictum that religion is an opium of the people. Its underlying spirit on the other hand may be best expressed in the contention that "the criticism of religion is the beginning of all criticism." (Karl Marx)

The first lecture deals with fundamental principles of the criticism of religion, which are applied to Hinduism in the next two lectures. Since criticism of Hinduism does not commence in it, it might appear as a digression. I feel contrained to take to that course, however, owing to the general absence of understanding of these fundamentals even in the ranks of otherwise educated people. Many a scholar, in the discussion of Hinduism, is often seen to have confused social polity, culture and religion with the result that the discussion of Hinduism tends to become an endless confusion. The relation of these had, therefore, to be indicated at the very outset.

The second lecture deals with the definitions and the criteria of religion discussed by the Hindu philosophers of ancient times, as also with the thought of a number of contemporaries about these problams. These may be regarded as the starting point of the criticism of Hinduism, which, therefore, can be said to directly begin with this lecture.

The third lecture deals with the general and the particular features of Hinduism, its various aspects, the different sects and sub-sects included in it, their historical sequence and its

significance. The relation between Hindu social polity and the Hindu religion, as well as that between the doctrine of the four-fold Varnas and the modern theory of race have also been discussed. I have also examined the modern attempts to reform or rationalise religion and have ended the lecture with a critical examination of the view that values deduced from religion are no longer essential for social progress in future.

Criticism of Hinduism is a responsible task and difficult too, for a variety of reasons. The political domination by the West has led to the growth of dogmatism and blind faith in the ranks of Indian nationalism. The ideas discussed herein might appear to be undermining that faith and hence offensive to those who live on it. The educated amongst us seem to have lost all spirit of criticism. There is no moral courage needed to attempt a critical examination of our religion, our social institutions and cultural life. Reason rising in revolt against tradition can alone render possible the lifting up of our social existence on to a higher level. But our entire social outlook puts a premium on the rationalisation of tradition. Very few amongst us have the spiritual courage to welcome criticism that examines all traditional values, scrutinises old ideas, institution and patterns of behaviour, inspires a spirit of revolt against traditional beliefs and institutions and leads to the emergence of a new life. A number of thinkers have been forging weapons with the help of reason and modern scientific knowledge, to combat the old world that has become a fetter on progress. While combatting the old in this manner, they have also been laying the foundations of a new life, which has no place for any kind of slavery, material or spiritual, which provides equal freedom to all and opens up opportunities for self-development to each and everyone. The present writer is only an humble participant in their ranks, a modest craftsman engaged in the task of producing those weapons.

1st October, 1941. LAXMANSHASTRI JOSHI.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF RELIGIOUS CRITICISM

PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS CRITICISM.

Criticism of Hinduism should begin with a statement of the criticism of religion in general; and a statement of the modern interpretation of the origin of religion. Both of these, therefore, should be dealt with at the outset.

The essential principles of the general criticism of religion as a historical phenomenon may briefly be summarised. Criticism of religion is a branch of the philosophy of history and "both were born together".* The fundamentals of the historical method demand a close and critical analysis of every historical event as an essential prerequisite for a general, comprehensive survey of historical evolution and development. It is this method that we should adopt in our approach to the criticism of religion.

Modern criticism of religion is founded on the principle that religion is the creation of the human mind and has evolved through it. Reason, therefore, is the instrument of its criticism. The subject-matter of this criticism is the study of the epistemological value of religious ideas; an inquiry into the purpose of religion; and a historical interpretation of religious notions and institutions. Religion evolves with the evolution of

The philosophy of religion is, in this sense, one aspect of the philosophy of history; and in point of fact, the two were born together, in the last quarter of the 18th century, in the closely related work of Lessing and Herder—Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, A. Pringle Pattison, p. 6.

society. The institutions of religion, therefore, correspond to the stage of development or degeneration of a given society. This evolution of religion possesses two essential features; firstly, its general consistency with the scientific thought and culture of the times based on it; and secondly, its ability to operate as a source of inspiration for social progress in a particular historical period.

It is also necessary in this connection to analyse briefly the concept of culture and the principles underlying the evolution of society in order to arrive at a correct and clear understanding of the above postulates.

Criticism of religion is a branch of general social science; for religion is a creation of society and its evolution is a part of social evolution. General social science may also be termed as the philosophy of history It originates from the criticism of the different social events and social transformations. A series of conclusions or principles, derived from a critical analysis of the activities and institutions of the entire human society and its different groups, go to constitute this "philosophy of history". Criticism of religion is therefore only an aspect of the philosophy of history.

Society is historical; every single aspect of it is, therefore, historical. It is necessary to examine every historical event as a link in a causally connected chain of events. These considerations will also apply to religion. Religion too can be conceived as a chain of historical events, from its most primitive, undeveloped forms to the higher, well developed and more adequate ones. It should, therefore, be understood by a proper grasp of the significance of the various factors involved in this development of events. Such an understanding itself can be styled as the historical criticism of religion.

This historical criticism is a product of western thought since the 18th century. The inhabitants of the continent of Europe had been for a long time, travelling widely and seeking to establish their domination over different parts of the world. This afforded them an excellent opportunity of collecting and compiling ample data for the study of the then existing and the past cultures of the various communities they had an occasion of contacting. The remnants of the civilisations,

that were no more, were also dug out from below the surface of the earth where they lay buried. A serious and detailed study of the social life and institutions of different communities inhabiting far-off regions such as Africa, Asia, Australia, America and Malaya was energetically undertaken. A study of the religions of these communities became a part of this general investigation. A vast amount of literature appeared, full of descriptions and explanations of the various stages in the evolution of religion and the various strange religious rites, ceremonies and customs prevailing in the different communities, differing from each other in various respects. The history of religion thus came to be widely known and therefore was born the historical criticism of religion. The different events in the history of religion began to be examined from the standpoint of the historical method.

Lessing and Herder may be accredited as the pioneers in the field of the Philosophy of Religion. Lessing's work, *The Education of the Human Race*, published in 1780, can be taken conveniently as the starting point. It was restricted however, "to the relation of Judaism and Christianity." This was followed by the contribution of Hegel to the Philosophy of History, a contribution which elevated the historical criticism of religion to a more developed and mature state. Then came the elaborate, detailed and minute dissertations in the 19th century. Tylor, in his *Primitive Culture* examined the various historical principles, deduced from a close study of the evolution of religion from its most primitive to the civilised forms. Then came the *Golden Bough* of Sir James Frazer, which, written in the tradition of Tylor's work, enriched it considerably by positive and mature contributions to the general criticism of religion. At the same time, in England, Spencer discussed at length the foundations and the fundamental values of religion, and Robertson Smith contributed his exhaustive studies of the history of the ancient religion of the Semites. A number of great and able critics of religion besides these, appeared in the 19th and the 20th centuries. The most noteworthy of them were Kant, Strauss and Feurbach in Germany, Comte and Durkheim in France, and Spencer, Tylor, Frazer, Robertson Smith, Marett, Tawney and others in England. The Indian religions similarly came to be extensively and elaborately studied by a number of leading orientalists like Sir William Jones, Zimmer, Max Muller,

Hopkins, Kunte, Bhandarkar and Tilak. Thus the entire data for the criticism of religion is vast indeed, and the field to be covered is extensive.

The history of religion is an interpretation of the causal connections of various religious institutions to be found in the different communities at different stages of their development. Religion always maintains consistency with the different stages in the historical development of society. This is its peculiar feature and as such is distinguishable from its general social purpose. This consideration is equally applicable to any particular aspect of history, covering any aspect of social life. This can be examined generally as also in its particular historical setting. The latter leads to a proper understanding of the purpose, working and the results of the different social institutions and thus indicates the correct way of discovering the basis of social science. A detailed analysis of social institutions, in their different particular forms, related to different historical settings, can alone enable us to deduce certain general principles that go to enrich our understanding. Turning to Economics, for example, it might be maintained that the theories of Adam Smith and Ricardo are applicable to the conditions of prosperous capitalism in England in the period of its ascent and are therefore useful in understanding it ; but elsewhere they lose their usefulness or applicability. This view indeed was quite ably advanced by German Economists like List, Mollar or Roscher. The wars depicted in the *Mahābhārata*, Alexander's the conquest of the world, the conquests of the Romans, the Arabs or Chengiz Khan, the victories of the European peoples in the different parts of the world, the world-war of 1914-18 and the present aggression by Germany have all been styled as 'wars' in history. But the essence of every one of these events and its results are different from those of every other. An interpretation of any war, therefore, can never be complete unless it were closely examined as a particular event. In the absence of such an examination, its proper meaning cannot be adequately grasped. Every historical event has its particular significance, and it is the examination of the particular which constitutes the correct foundation of a philosophy of history. That is the fundamental technique of the historical method and in the criticism of religion, it will be necessary for us to use that technique.

The philosophy of religion "abrogates the traditional distinction between true and perfect religion and false and corrupt creeds". The followers of Hinduism, Christianity or Islam believe in this distinction being made in their own way. But it is based on sentiment and faith which has no place in the philosophy of religion, viewing as it does every religion as a particular historical event. It does not recognise supernatural revelation or divine origin as being its foundation. For, once this is recognised, there hardly remains any scope for philosophy whose proper office should be, "to purify religious belief and practice by teaching man to discard intellectually untenable or morally unworthy conceptions of the divine." Once the supernatural is accepted as the foundation and the criterion of religion, a free intellectual criticism of it becomes an impossibility. Then the only task that remains for human reason to perform is to arrange the different forms of religion, supernaturally revealed, in a neat and precise manner. The correctness and purpose of those forms can be decided by the supernatural authority alone. And one who claims to be the recepient of divine revelation can alone be entitled to say the last word about it. It must, however, be mentioned here that though the supernatural is not accepted either as the foundation or the criterion of religion, the philosophy of religion nevertheless studies it as an important part of its subject matter. We shall have occasion to turn to a discussion of this, however, at a later stage in the present inquiry.

Reason is the principle instrument of the criticism of religion. The historical forms of religion are the creation of the human mind in various and varied surroundings. They are the products of human intellect, emotions and aspirations. To examine them critically and thus to purify the religous faith, emotion and idea is the task of the philosophy of religion. This need not necessarily lead to the foundation of a new religion ; at least in future, it will not do so. For, the age of founding new religions has already passed long ago.

The criticism of religion by *Cārwāka* in ancient times, or that by the European and American philosophers of the 18th century was essentially one-sided. They did not recognise the significant role of religion in the history of man. Theirs, undoubtedly, was a herculean effort to expose the fallacies, contra-

dictions, superstitions, deceptions and stupidities in religion. It was an effort to enlighten the people by showing them that all religion meant an incredibly long dark night of fraudulent and deceptive thoughts for oppressed humanity. "D'Alembert was of the opinion that it would be well if history, with its record of 'fraud and error' could be simply obliterated from memory like a vast night. To Voltaire, historical religion was nothing but a huge organisation of conscious fraud under whose cover unscrupulous rogues enslaved and exploited the ignorant masses. As he puts it, speaking of a doctrine prominent in many religions of an earlier type, 'it was the invention of the first knave who met a fool'. Hume, towards the end of his 'Natural History of Religion' came to a similar conclusion. 'Examine the religious principles which have in fact prevailed in the world. You will scarcely be pursuaded that they are anything but sick man's dreams, or perhaps will regard them more as the playsome whimsies of monkeys in human shape, than the serious, positive dogmatical assertions of a being who dignifies himself with the name of rational.'"* *Cārwāka,* in ancient times had criticised religion, perhaps in stronger terms.

This destructive tendency of sweeping away the dogmas of religion with the help of rationalism was an essential but insufficient step towards the progress of man. It was insufficient because it did not touch the crux of the problem; which consists in explaining religion as a social force. Religion is backed and supported by a certain social structure and atmosphere, created and determined by a set of historical circumstances. It is an easy task to bring into light the follies in religion. But the real question is to explain why for centuries together, religion dominated man and was looked upon as a resort in spite of those follies being there from its beginning to date. It is this all important question that is often sidetracked in the attempts to expose its follies and errors. History tells us of man's having lived in conformity with the tenets of religious creeds or the prescriptions of religious institutions, based on dogmatic conceptions and fallacious conclusions. The cause of this peculiar phenomenon must, therefore, be discovered in the fact that religion is a social force, defending a particular set of interests in society. It proved to be effective and was formidable in the earlier history of man, and therefore, must be examined critically in all its aspects. It will

*Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, A. Pringle Pattison—pp. 5-7.

not be weakened or undermined simply by proving its falsity or futility. For that, its social utility will have to disappear. "Mere knowledge....is not enough to bring social forces under the control of society. What is above all necessary for this, is a social act. And when this act has been accomplished, when society by taking possession of all means of production, and using them on a planned basis, has freed itself and all its members from the bondage in which they are now held by means of production, which they themselves have produced but which now confront them as an irresistible extraneous force, when therefore man no longer merely proposes but also disposes—only then will the last extraneous force which is reflected in religion vanish ; and with it will also vanish the religious reflection itself, for the simple reason that then there will be nothing left to reflect."*

The history of the evolution of religion is also the history of its philosophy. Religious institutions, principles, taboos and emotions undergo changes from time to time and the old is replaced by the new. Underlying this change is to be found a spirit of critical rationalism. A change in his environment changes the experience of man and the new experience makes him modify or destroy the old institutions. This tendency towards the modification or destruction of the old is born of reason. Old ideas and ideals fade away giving rise to the new that are brought into being always by an intellectual impulse. Thus reason acts as the driving force behind the progressive tendencies of man ; and is responsible for the evolution, growth or the decline of religion. It is true that the basis of religion is a number of instincts and emotions like faith, devotion, love, hatred, fear or wonder. But underlying them all, is always to be found some process of reasoning, implicit or expressed, primitive or well-developed. It is this that gives meaning to them all and should therefore be regarded as the foundation of religion. New reasoning springs up from the destruction of the old, achieved by subjecting it to a critical examination ; which is styled as the criticism of religion. This critical spirit is evidenced in the history of every religion, especially in periods of transition.

New thought has always been branded as 'heretical' by the champions of the old. Faith, properly speaking, is simply

* Anti-Duhring, Frederich Engels. pp. 354-55.

the conviction of the truth of a certain set of ideas. But at present it is generally used in the sense of the conviction of a person reluctant to use the knowledge of man. Any set of ideas, be they new or old, noble or ignoble, must inspire conviction about their truth. The only exceptions to this are perhaps the nihilists and the agnostics; but they too possess certain ideas the truth of which they do not doubt. It is this conviction, therefore, that can be called belief. But the term will often be found used in opposition to reason, or logic. It is true that there often exists a conflict between the two; but it is strictly a conflict between the old thought and the new. The faith in the old thought gets shaken when it is subjected to criticism by the new and it is this that makes the champions of the old call the new as heretical. If indeed there is heresy in it, it is a heresy that heralds the birth of a new age. It creates new ideas, new values and a new social order that sustains them. The founders of religion like Buddha, Christ or Mohamed had in their own days this privilege of being styled as heretics. Is it any, wonder, then, that the modern criticism of religion which strives to put religion in the melting pot and test it critically with the help of reason, should have been called heretical?

The *Upanis'adas* subjected the old conceptions of deity, God, Soul, Transmigration or *Yajna* to criticism. The result was the realisation of the futility of the traditional institution of *Yajna*. *Yajñawalkya* resolved three thousand deities into one in the *Brhadārnyakopanis'ad*. The old conception of God as a person was replaced by that which made of him a principle. The old Gods thus started melting when the old religious ideas were thrown into the fire of intellectual criticism.

The concluding part of the *Vedic* period was similarly marked by the rise of the various *Dars'anas* which sprang up for the purpose of critically examining various religious notions and rearranging properly traditional thought. They discussed elaborately the meaning of God, Universe, Life and *Karma* and such other notions; and can, therefore, be called the criticism of religion. In the same category may also be put the *Dars'anas* of the *Buddhists*, *Jains* and *Cārwāka*, though these had for their purpose, the dispelling of the *Vedic* religion and its influence with the help of reason and thus furnishing the justification of a new religion.

This criticism of religion, found in the *Dars'anas*, was concerned with testing the truth or falsehood of various religious ideas and principles with the help of reason. Modern criticism of religion does not stop with that alone ; it goes much further. It endeavours to find out the particular set of social conditions in a particular historical period in which a given religious principle came into existence, the different historico-social factors that were responsible for its rise, and the social purpose which it served. Particular religious institutions and ideas are the result of particular social conditions. Modern criticism of religion, therefore, is further concerned with how a change in the latter leads to a change in the former also. It may thus be regarded as a threefold criticism. It examines the truth or falsehood of religious principles ; the historical social purpose of religious institutions ; and a historical causal interpretation of the rise and evolution of different religious institutions and principles.

This historical criticism of religion affords an interpretation of the history of religion as an evolutionary process. Religion has passed through many a form from the most primitive to the well developed ones. And these have in between them a number of gradations all of them indicating a continuity of development, corresponding to the development of society.

The level of a particular social institution can be judged only from an all-sided survey of its culture. And religion also evolves with the evolution of the other aspects of culture. This continuity does not and need not mean an uninterrupted progress from the primitive to the modern times. There are to be seen a number of ups and downs on the way. But history goes to show that society has generally progressed all along, notwithstanding these ups and downs. Various nations came into prominence in ancient times and faded away. But their cultural attainments were inherited by others, who seem to have exchanged these among themselves. This is clearly evidenced in the cases of the ancient cultures of Crete, Egypt, Sumer, Palestine, India and China. The achievements of the Mediterranean culture in Asia and Africa, were inherited by the Ancient Greeks, who were the fore-runners of the Romans, whose achievements led to the birth of Medieval Europe. It inherited the achievements of the Arabs in the realm of science and art, and thus was heralded birth of modern western civilisation.

Nations rose and fell but culture evolved and progressed on the whole, and with it evolved religion. There was no inevitability about this progress. History, on the other hand, tells us of a number of nations and cultures having entirely disappeared from the surface of the Earth, owing to the triumph of reactionary forces. But though disappearing individually, they had their achievements inherited by others—a fact accounting for the general progress of society as a whole.* The path travelled by humanity from its inception to our own day will thus be ultimately found to be a path of progress. What thus holds good of man and his culture is also applicable to his religion. Occasionally the progress was uninterrupted, evolutionary; occasionally it was dilectical, the new being born out of the destruction of the old. On occasions, periods of prolonged stagnation and decay are also to be witnessed. And the institutions of religion have passed through all these phases of social development.

The religion of a particular society corresponds to the particular stage of its development. In fact, this is true of all the different aspects of its culture. Like music it possesses a harmony in its different constituents. It is therefore, impossible to discover a society, backward in all other aspects but possessed of a highly developed religion. The popular saying that "men possess the gods they deserve" expresses, indeed, an important historical truth. The development of religion in a particular society depends upon the extent to which its other aspects, its productive organisation, its art and science, its knowledge of the universe—are all developed. History furnishes us with ample data in corroboration of the above contention. Let us take, for example, the religious institutions of human sacrifice and slavery. When a society does not know the use to which land can be put, when it has not sufficiently developed the art of agriculture, it cannot recognise the importance and the value of other human beings. It is but natural that under such conditions, the deity should be propitiated by human sacrifice. When a tribe under such conditions fights with and conquers another tribe, the only thing it can think of in respect of the conquered

* "The fact of progress is written plain and large on the page of history, but progress is not a law of nature. The ground gained by one generation may be lost by the next. The thoughts of men may flow into the channels which lead to disaster and barbarism." A History of Europe H. A. L. Fisher-preface p. v.

is their wholesale massacre and that becomes a part of the tribal religion pertaining to warfare. It is only the females of the conquered that are protected. But when once it has learned to get productive labour performed by the conquered and thus to derive the benefits therefrom, human sacrifice or wholesale massacre of the conquered disappears making room for slavery. The conquered, instead of being killed, are made slaves; and mercy replaces murder as a part of religion.

A critical examination of all the different religions will show that their social basis has been in an undeveloped productive organisation, backwardness and a general inadequacy and incorrectness of the knowledge of the forces of nature. It is these that have endowed religion with its particular feature, the unrealistic element of the supernatural. The fictitious character of this element becomes quite plain in the case of primitive societies, for, it is found there in a crude form. In organised and developed societies however it assumes more subtle forms and is surrounded by elaborate sophistication, arguments and explanations. It is thus obvious that the different religions do not represent the same level of backwardness, for, the different social organisations in which they rise and develop do not do so. The level of development attained by religious institutions is determined by that of the society to which they belong.

Religious institutions, endowing the forces of nature with consciousness, are to be seen only in backward societies. Those, on the other hand, that speak of the reign of justice in the world, viewing it as bound by laws of *Kārma*, conceiving God as the symbol of justice are witnessed in the more developed social organisations. Societies which once worshiped the material forces of nature as deities, are seen, with some development, worshiping deities symbolising ethical principles or spiritual conceptions. The change may be rapid in some cases, while in others it may be spread over long periods of time. But it permits a classification of the forms of religious institutions into lower and higher ones. The gods of the Vedic period or of Greek mythology are the material forces of nature. And it was out of this Polytheism itself that Monotheism arose at later stages in western religions as well as in those of the Hindus or the Muslims. At the root of this transformation lay a social change as is clear from history. And western historians have thrown considerable light on this

development as far as Christianity and Islam are concerned. To turn to a recent case in point, the Industrial Revolution led to the rise of capitalist society and this change brought about a transformation in Christianity as has been ably shown by Max Weber or R. H. Tawney in their leading works on Christianity.

The evolution of religion thus indicates an orderly development from tribal religions to national religions and from these to the Universal ones. When society is in its nomadic stage, and is therefore of the nature of a wandering group or tribe, its religious institutions are designated as tribal religions. Every group possesses a religion of its own. But when many of them settle down on a certain definite portion of the earth's surface, the nation springs into existence and religion takes up a national character. Judaism or the Vedic religions in ancient India are typical cases in point. With the rise of Buddhism, came into being the Universal religion. With the development of the land and sea routes between Europe, Asia and Africa, and commencement of the exchange of goods and services between them, societies inhabiting these distant tracts of the Earth's surface came in contact with each other and realised the fundamental unity of man. This experience of common humanity was the condition precedent to the rise of the universal religion and in it alone lay its roots. Buddhism was the first Universal religion. It transcends the limits of family, tribe, community or nation, and claims to show man the path of salvation. Hinduism Christianity or Islam may also be said to belong to this category. They claim to show all the way to salvation. Thus in the evolution of religion as a social phenomenon, tribal, national and universal, are, more or less, well-marked stages in a progressive development.

It will thus be clear, as stated at the outset, that the modern criticism of religion suggests a twofold criteria for judging the evolution of religion. Firstly, religion should maintain a formal consistency with scientific knowledge and the culture based on it, possessed by society in a given historical period in which it professes it, and secondly, it should be helpful, and act as a driving force of social and cultural progress, a particular society seeks to attain.

It will be worthwhile to clarify, in this connection, the relation of religion with science. The existence of every

society is based on, and determined by its scientific knowledge, which is nothing else but a systematised knowledge of various phenomena. The extent of the development of this knowledge in a given society, goes to determine its general cultural level. For, the essence of culture consists in the ability to use the powers of Nature as well as the inner powers of man. Religious institutions, therefore in order that they may be helpful to general social progress, must be consistent with scientific knowledge. And it is this, their social utility that goes to decide their level—whether they are low and primitive or high and well-developed. It is thus alone that we can critically examine various religious notions such as polytheism, pantheism and so on.

In order to explain the causal relation of natural and social events, which appeared inexplicable, a deity was postulated. It was held as the cause of those events. Thus the failure to afford a correct and realistic explanation, led to the creation of one, imaginary, unrealistic and delusive, and the deity was born. Thus deity is delusion. And most of these delusions disappear in monotheism. Hence it represents a higher form of society and culture. It can further be similarly distinguished from pantheism in which no supernatural being intervenes with natural events and their causal sequence. It may exist but it is not different from the universe and its happenings. Thus pantheism comes much nearer to scientific knowledge than monotheism. Christianity or Islam are monotheistic religions, while the religion of the *Upanisádas* is pantheistic.

It is from this point of view that Hegel's view on Hinduism can be shown as mistaken. His argument seeks to establish the inferiority of Hinduism as compared to Christianity on the ground that while god in Christianity is 'spirit', in Hinduism it is merely substance. Out of it, proceeds, everything, and lives in it, into it vanishes again. "God is here substance, the undetermined, abstract, contentless, emptyness and vacancy." Christianity, on the other hand, views Him as "spirit", and hence holds the view that He created the universe, and not that the universe proceeded from Him. But this view of Hegel cannot be accepted. The religion which asserts that 'God created the universe' is the farthest from science and therefore cannot be viewed as superior at all.*

* The Philosophy of Hegel—W.T. Stace pp. 495—514

A thought or mode of behaviour is developed or otherwise to the extent to which it is in accord with the requirements of science. And this applies to every walk of our social life, to its every aspect. A medical science for example, must be deemed as backward and primitive if it seeks to analyse and diagnose different diseases in terms of magic, rigmarole, or divine or devilish powers. It develops, on the other hand, by learning to take into account the various materials and their properties, as well as the effects of the various inter-actions of the organism and its surroundings. Religion similarly seeks to interpret different material events in terms of a divine causation. And hence the various sciences interpreting these in terms of material causal relation, enjoy a superiority over religion. The laws of *Manu* being based on the concept of the unknown *Karma* are in the same manner to be viewed as inferior to the laws *e.g.* of *Kautilya's Arthas'āstra* based on known relations of things. Man's power over the universe increases with an increase in his knowledge of it. The different supernatural mystic, theistic, or fatalistic ideas and ideologies, naturally enough, recede into the background with the rise of a society that facilitates his conquest over nature. An important support of religion are these ideas of the world elsewhere, or the divine and mysterious forces. The greater the extent to which this support is available to religion, the greater is its ignorance. And culture too is backward to the extent to which it is based on these and similar other notions.

CULTURE AND RELIGION.

Let us now turn to a brief understanding of the concept of culture. It may be defined as the art of using spiritual and material forces for the well-being of human life. The spiritual force is man himself and the material ones are the universe around him. The spiritual aspect of culture consists in man's developing himself, regulating and directing his desires and emotions, improving his knowledge and thus seeking to attain an intensive and subtle growth of his thoughts, emotions, desires and aspirations. The concepts of morality, beauty, truth, justice, ideal, progress etc. are all related to this aspect. And in it are also included law, religion, literature, science, and politics. The material aspect, on the other hand, consists in the transformation of the universe around us in a manner favourable to social life.

It embraces all the different efforts of man to harness the forces of nature to his use. The dividing line between the two is, however, not clear. They are in fact, interdependent ; and are fused into each other. But the material is the basis of the spiritual aspect. Man changes and develops himself in changing and transforming the forces of nature, adapting them to his own use. Even the deepest and the most subtle relations of men have that material foundation : The various relations among men, directly or indirectly, are based on the order for the satisfaction of his material needs. The concepts of divine or devilish wealth in the *Geetā* or *Manu's* conception of *Varnās'rama* are thus linked up with the contemporary social orders. The development of the material aspect thus goes to determine the progress of the spiritual. History furnishes no instance, nor will it ever do so, of a backward primitive level of material life accompanied by a high and developed spiritual one.

"Culture itself is many-sided. It includes the multitude of relations between man and nature ; the procuring and preservation of food ; the securing of shelter ; the ways in which objects of nature are used as implements and utensils ; and all the various ways in which man utilises and controls, or is controlled by his natural environment ; animals, plants, the inorganic world, the seasons, and wind and weather. A second large group of cultural phenomena relate to the interrelation between members of a single society and between those belonging to different societies. The bonds of family, of tribe, and of a variety of social groups are included in it, as well as the gradation of rank and influence ; the relation of the sexes and of old and young, and in more complex societies, the whole political and religious organisation. Here belong also the relations of social groups in war and peace. A third group consists of the subjective reactions of man to all the manifestations of life contained in the first two groups. These are of an intellectual and emotional nature and may be expressed in thought and feeling as well as in action. They include all rational attitudes and those valuations which we include under the terms of ethics, aesthetics and religion."*

Thus Boas includes religion in the second and the third groups. Culture is dynamic and therefore has a history. So is religion. And therefore it is necessary to understand the prin-

* General Anthropology—Boas and others pp. 4-5.

ciples of the evolution of society and culture in order to understand properly the evolution of religion. In order to attain this understanding, it is necessary to study separately and together the various aspects of culture.

The history and growth of culture is a matter of controversy. Two broad viewpoints hold the field in this respect, the evolutionist and the diffusionist. The former has for its advocates, Sir E. B. Tylor, Sir James Fraser and other well-known anthropologists; while the latter is propounded by Elliot Smith in England and a number of important Austrian and German sociologists. The evolutionist view holds that the culture of every particular society is born of its social needs and the process of their satisfaction. These needs may generally be grouped into two categories; the primary and the secondary. Self-preservation, continuation of the species, and the general upbringing of the new-born are the primary needs; while the rest may be viewed as secondary. Their continual increase is the peculiar characteristic of both these needs. And it is this increase that leads to the development of society and its culture. The diffusionists, on the other hand, hold the view that particular societies alone are possessed of the ability to evolve well-developed cultures. With others it is a matter of "imitation, or taking over." It is this that leads to the diffusion and interchange of the different cultural forms and patterns. Elliot Smith traces, for example, the growth of culture to ancient Egypt. It was there that the various parts of culture such as agriculture, commerce, sculpture polity, religious institutions, priesthood, the art of writing and language, navigation and warfare, originated in the beginning. And then they spread all over the world, bringing about its cultural development. The German scholars, on the other hand, argue that originally eight different cultural patterns were evolved in the world. And the present cultural life of humanity is the result of their exchanges, fusion, encroachments and clashes.

Both the views contain an element of truth. The diffusionists however, have a narrower viewpoint, since they credit only a few particular societies with the ability to evolve culture. In fact they insist on that. The evolutionist approach is on the other hand, more scientific in character. Given a suitable general environment, all the different societies are capable of cultural development, and they lag behind only in the absence of

the former. The diffusionists have chosen a narrow and restricted criterion in interpreting the history of culture.* The evolutionist attempts to prove the possibility of a limitless growth of culture with the help of a deep and profound study of history ; and thus holds out a bright future for both advanced and backward societies. He thus inspires an unending urge for progress. The diffusionist on the other hand, unknowingly perhaps, relapses by implications into a glorification of those that have already scaled the heights of cultural attainments. That, culture has grown through contact, exchange or clash is the only acceptable contention in his argument. But that is not the only cause of its growth. The important factor accounting for the rise and development of culture has been social needs and the urge for their satisfaction. It is these needs that have made different societies shift from one part of the earth's surface to another ; encroach on others, mix with others, and bring about an intermingling of different cultural forms or patterns.

It is necessary to take into consideration, in this connection, the view of the German scholar, Oswald Spengler, as propounded in his *Decline of the West* for, Spengler is regarded as an important philosopher of the Nazi order in Germany. "Cultures are organism, and world history is their collective biography. Morphologically, the immense history of the Chinese, or of the classical culture is the exact equivalent of the petty history of the individual man, or of the animal or the tree, or the flower.... In the destinies of the several cultures that follow upon one another, grow up together, touch, overshadow and suppress one another, is compressed the whole content of human history. And if we set free their shapes, till now hidden all too deep under the surface of a tribe history of human progress, and let them march past us in the spirit, it cannot but be that we shall succeed in distinguishing amidst all that is special or unessential, the primitive culture-form, the culture that underlies as ideal all the individual cultures."

"I distinguish the idea of a culture, which is the sum-total of its inner possibilities, from its sensible phenomenon or ap-

* "The method of the school consists in a careful mapping out of cultural similarities over large portions of the globe and in speculative reconstructions as to how the similar units of culture have wandered from one place to another." Bronislaw Malinowski on Culture, Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, vol. IV, p. 624.

pearance upon the canvass of history as a fulfilled actuality. It is the relation of the soul to the living body, to its expression in the light-world perceptible to our eyes. This history of culture is the progressive actualizing of its possible, and the fulfilment is equivalent to the end. In this way the Apollyon soul, which some of us can perhaps understand and share in, is related to its unfolding in the realm of actuality, to the "classical" or the "Antique" as we call it, of which the tangible and understandable relics are investigated by the archeologist, the philologist, the aesthetic and the historian."

"A culture is born in the moment when a great soul awakens out of the proto-spirituality of ever-childish humanity, and detaches itself, a form from the formless, a bounded and mortal thing from the boundless and enduring. It blooms on the soil of an exactly definable land-scape, to which plantwise soul has actualized the full sum of its possibilities in the shape of people, languages, dogmas, arts, states, sciences, and reverts into the proto-soul. But its living existence, that sequence of great epochs which define and display the stages of fulfilment, is an inner passionate struggle to maintain the idea, against the powers of chaos without and the unconscious muttering deep down within. It is not only the artist who struggles against the resistance of the material and the stifling of the idea within him. Every culture stands in a deeply symbolical, almost a mystical, relation to the extended, the space in which and through which it strives to actualise itself. The aim once attained—the idea, the entire content of inner possibilities, fulfilled and made externally actual the culture suddenlv hardens, it mortifies, its blood congeals, its force breaks down, and it becomes civilization; the thing which we feel and understand in the words Egypticism, Byzantinism, Mandarinism. As such they may, like a worn-out giant of the primeval forest, thrust their decaying branches towards the sky for hundreds or thousands of years, as we see in China, in India, in the Islamic world."

"Every culture passes through the age-phases of the individual man. Each has its childhood, youth, manhood and old age. Every culture, every adolescence and maturing and decay of a culture, everyone of its intrinsically necessary stages and periods, has a definite duration, always the same, always recurring with the emphasis of a symbol."*

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* The Decline of the West by Oswald Spengler—pp. 104-110.

These different stages are marked by achievements peculiar to them. Thus the childhood of a culture for example, is the period of the blossoming of the instinctive life. It is an age of war and poetry, full of universal emotions. From it, the culture passes to the age of adolescence and youth. Civic life grows, and sculpture and architecture, painting, organised religion mathematics and astrology begin to develop. These intellectual activities attain maturity and fructify in the age of manhood. This is generally an age of reason and of philosophy. Science grows, and knowledge is systemmatised. Old traditions are examined and wealth and learning are honoured. Then follows the old age, the age of decay and death, when life freezes, and chaos comes to prevail. Love of mankind strengthens and religion takes up a moral character. The vision becomes materialistic, faith weakens, and reason comes to dominate. Respect for the machine and its creations grows, and thought sinks, depressed and indifferent.

Every great culture has passed through these four stages, and once it has done so, it ceases to have a future. The peoples who inherit it, may thereafter spread all over the world or may bury themselves in an eternal darkness in their land. Thus, according to Spengler, there is no hope for the peoples of the different parts of the world, excepting the Germans. The Chinese, the Indians and the inhabitants of the Islamic countries are now doomed to eternal slavery of others. That indeed is their destiny.

This Spenglerian conception of culture is based on mysticism. Spengler perhaps, has simply developed in a better and more comprehensive manner the Vedic conception of the "Virata Purusha"—from the Purushasuktas.* His idea of "the great soul" is simply a poetic romantic mystic principle. It will not stand the test of a scientific examination. Even the question of such an examination need not arise in his case ; for he himself views science and reason as the symptoms of decline or decay. And that makes his whole analysis devoid of any scientific value. Marx, for example, has given us an analysis of the great social transformation from feudalism to the capitalist order from the point of view of historical materialism. When one looks at that reasoned

* Rigveda 10-90 Vajasaneyi Samhita A. 30.

analysis, Spengler's analysis, appears to be a mere play of mystic romantic and imaginary ideas. It cannot and does not deserve any serious consideration.

The different sociologists, in their studies of human culture, have attempted to investigate three main problems. Firstly, the structure and interpretation of human history; secondly, the particular types of historical events and their sequence; and thirdly, the dynamics of historical change or evolution. The last has figured as well in the writing of the famous sociologist, Karl Marx, especially in the introduction to a *Critique of Political Economy* and the *Communist Manifesto*. A given society, according to him, is structurally composed of the material foundation or the basic structure and the superstructure. The mode of production and the relations of men based on it, go to constitute the basic structure. The mode of production is the mode of producing the various useful requisites of human existence. The peculiarities of it give rise to the different relations of men; and the basis of both of these is material. The production of the different requisites of existence, their distribution, exchange and consumption, give rise to different groups in society, styled as classes. Thus the mode of production and the different classes that spring from it form the basis of the spiritual superstructure of society. This is composed of language, art, science, literature, law, religion, the political structure and so on. These are all the products of the human mind and are concerned with mental values. Reason, emotions and the aspirations of man evolve through them. Thus, according to Marx, the religion of a particular society is a part of this superstructure. This superstructure is not distinct nor distinguishable from the material foundation of society. They are interdependent and inter-acting.

With a change in the material foundation of society, the superstructure also undergoes a change. The two are interdependent. The concept of a perfect society or a perfect kingdom is unrealistic to say the least. Every particular society or social institution is a link in a causally connected chain. It disappears, making room for the new. Its necessity or rationale is limited by the particular period of time to which it belongs. Beyond that, it assumes an unnecessary and irrational character. It must thus give way before the new, emerging to take its place.

Just as the institutions and ideals of feudal society melted away and disappeared with the rise of capitalism, capitalism must also disappear, once it has outlived its social utility and become a barrier in the way of social progress. The necessity or rationale of a social order or an institution is thus relative —to time.

What applies to society is also applicable to human thought and actions. No thought is perfect. It is continually evolving from the lower to the higher stages; but does not attain the stage of perfection. There is in it an infinite series of gradations indicating development. If, therefore, someone clings to it with the idea of having discovered the ultimate perfect truth, the action is bound to be self-deceptive. What holds good of thought also does so in the case of sentiments or ideals. Even the ideals of happiness in the world elsewhere or salvation, set before mankind by the founders and apostles of different religions, have undergone change in the course of history. Thus, for example, in the present century after the rise of Indian nationalism, there developed a tendency in the writings of the different nationalist-minded philosophers, to ascribe a subordinate or secondary position to the ideal of salvation as preached in the Upanishadas or the Bhagavad-Gita and to exalt above it the concepts of national salvation or the salvation of the entire world. Thus, it is curious to note, that those, who claimed permanence for the doctrines of the Vedas or the Bhagavad Gita, were themselves responsible for destroying that permanence.

Marx has described the various stages in the history of social development and has given their evolutionary sequence. But in doing so, he has not based his analysis on any particular isolated aspect of the basic or the super structure. On the contrary, his social dynamics takes into consideration society as a whole, its various forms, their causal sequence and the laws of their change. These forms broadly are the primitive or gentile communist society, the patriarchal, the ancient, feudal, capitalistic and the socialistic society. This represents a very broad division; while in reality may be found a number of forms, arising out of their combinations, themselves determined by various material historical social factors. Different particular societies found today can thus be fitted into this broad and general scheme, and every particular society is possessed of religion, cor-

responding to the particular stage of its development.

Relics of the barbarous or semi-civilised societies of the past are being studied by the anthropologists. They are also investigating a number of such societies found scattered in different parts of the world even today. All these efforts generally lead to the conclusion that the level of the forms of religion, prevalent in these different societies, is conditioned by their peculiar material conditions of existence. Their religious taboos and emotions, festivals and fares as also their deities are all consistent with the material conditions of their existence. The researches of Tylor, Fraser, Spencer, Durkheim, Marett, Malinowski, Weber, Tawney and a host of others materially substantiate the conclusion and support it.

ORIGIN OF RELIGION.

We would now turn to an analysis of the causes that give rise to religion and the elementary and primitive forms of it.

It is impossible to discover any people, primitive or civilised, without religion or magic. Life in the primitive community can be divided into two domains—the sacred and the profane. These may as well be called the divine and the earthly or the spiritual and the material. "On the one hand, there are the traditional acts and observances regarded by the nations as sacred, carried out with reverence and awe, hedged round with prohibitions and special rules of behaviour. Such acts and observances are always associated with beliefs in supernatural forces, especially those of magic or with ideas about beings, spirits, ghosts, dead ancestors, or Gods. On the other hand, a little reflection is sufficient to show that no art or craft however primitive could have been invented or maintained, no organised form of hunting, fishing, tilling or search for food could be carried out without the careful observation of the natural process and a firm belief in its regularity, without the power of reasoning and without confidence in the power of reason, that is, without the rudiments of science."* This division is also to be discerned in the well-developed societies, wherein the sacred domain is related to ideas like salvation or heaven. It is this that constitutes the domain of religion.

* Bronislaw Malinowski on "Magic, Science and Religion" in "Science, Religion and Reality" edited by Joseph Needham, p. 21.

The sacred, however, is related to or even mixed up with the profane. Religious instincts, emotions or actions have a bearing on worldly behaviour. The result has been the opinion of some religious prophets and philosophers that religion embraces all actions of man. Notwithstanding this view, however, the distinction is always maintained by ordinary mortals in their day-to-day behaviour and life. Those who look at everything in life through the eye of religion, are indeed few and far between. It is true that in the religious thought of the more developed communities, life is more closely linked up with the sacred principles of religion ; but even then, all human actions are not widely held as being determined by religion. It does not exert any serious influence on ordinary social behaviour. In primitive communities too, the domain of the sacred is fairly demarcated. Tilling, sowing, reaping, construction of boats, hunting or the planting of a tree are all taken, even by the primitive, as being different from religious acts. The latter are to be performed for avoiding draughts or reaping good harvests, for the safety of travel or for happiness in life. They are no doubt connected with the realm of the profane but they are different ; and every community knows and recognises the difference.

The primitive community possesses no science. In it, however, are created the preconditions and laid the foundations for its subsequent rise. Similarly, the foundations of religion as is witnessed in the more-developed or civilised societies, are also being laid there. The basis of this religion of the civilised communities is a certain philosophy of life and the world. But primitive religion does not take into account the world or even life as a whole. In fact it cannot do so. The entire social energy, under those conditions, is expended for the satisfaction of the essential basic needs of physical existence. And the development of thought is limited by this factor. The ideals too are closely related with it. Obtaining food, avoiding diseases, averting dangers, procreation, and the protection and upbringing of children absorb all the time along with the propitiation of deities or praying for help to the mysterious supernatural forces for the attainment of these elementary ends. It is natural that under these conditions, religion or its philosophy should not arise, though these can be marked in their general form by the more discerning eye. That makes a study of the earlier forms of religion, a necessary and useful task.

It may be asked at this stage as to why it has been found necessary to go through this study of the essential features of religion—from its primitive to its more developed forms, in the course of this criticism of Hinduism. The answer lies in the complexity of Hinduism itself. It is so curiously full of the different forms and aspects of religion at different stages of its development that a brief statement like this is essential while commencing its criticism. The profound and difficult aspects of religion can be understood only with the help of an understanding of its development and the different stages in that development.

The material and the social are the two aspects of human life; and these need the aid of the material and the social forces. The material and the social are the inevitable needs in human life, and these two needs, these two desirables, are the cause of the rise of religion. They are its root. The material aspects of life can be said to comprise of self-preservation, the acceptance for that purpose of the things around us as they are and with all their properties and an orderly procreation. These aspects depend on the material means. Land, food, vegetation, covering, home, medicine, weapons and so on are all its requirements. And the various material forces alone can furnish these. The primitive community is engaged all the time in a constant struggle to obtain these; and they can be had only as a result of human effort—manual or mental. A knowledge of the phenomena around him and of their causal connections, alone can enable man to obtain these requirements of his physical existence. And human reason thus comes to possess a natural tendency to discover these causal connections in the constant "struggle for existence". Thus reason is the fundamental driving force of life. It is this force alone that has made man superior to the non-human universe; and enabled him to conquer, step by step, the unbounded forces of nature.

In this hunt for a cause, he gets confronted with the different events around him which influence his day-to-day life; but cannot understand and interpret them. He does not, therefore, command the forces of nature to an extent as can lead to a betterment of his own existence. Since, however, they affect him favourably or otherwise, he is very curious to know and to understand them. His naive and simple mind is continually

affected by them. Sunrise and sunset, the dawn and the twilight, the eclipses, the clouds, the rains, the seasons, animals, vegetation, earthquakes, the various diseases and maladies, life and death all produce their repurcussions. Various emotions arise in the individual, as a reaction to these events, and these have a deep influence on him. They do not allow him to be at rest with himself. His curiosity is aroused. He wants to understand the causes of the different events occuring in his surroundings ; and thinks about them. But his definite knowledge of them is limited. The result is the rise of different imaginary and unreal explanations, the imposition of supernatural forces and personalities on the events of nature. The human mind weaves a web of imaginary and fantastic ideas, with the object of explaining the nature of the world.

Thus the supernatural forces and personalities arise essentially out of the mistaken interpretations put upon the events of nature, of this world. It is out of the experience of the latter that the former arise, and this, their basis, becomes evident and clear, once they are subjected to a critical analysis. One can easily understand how to analyse them, if one analyses a few imaginative ideas of a poet.

These imaginary forces and personalities excite various emotions such as those of fear, respect, surrender, or love. Aware of his helplessness, man time and again seeks their assistance. He tries to obtain it in a two-fold manner. The religious rite is an attempt at obtaining this assistance either by persuading them or by making them his own. The former is achieved through prayer, while the latter is attained through Sàdhàna. Devotion occupies a predominant position in the former, the magical rites do so in the latter.

The term 'magical rites' is used here in the most comprehensive sense. The various rites indicated and included in the Atharva Veda are mostly implicit in that conception. Even the different Yajnas, mentioned and elaborated in the Vedas include rites which can best be expressed by the term 'magic.' The different particular rites suggested for the attainment of objects like rains, rich harvests, improvements of the cattle or the procreation of children, avoidance of disease or the happiness of family, clan, village or the nation, all are included in these magical rites. These enable man, to establish, in a mysterious way, his control

over the supernatural. The object of these rites is to make the supernatural forces do different things towards the fulfilment of man's desires.

Prayer, on the other hand, is a persuasive action. It also implies surrender. The underlying conception in this case is that the fulfilment of desire depends upon the will, whim or the favour of the supernatural forces. Various acts like worship Havana, bowing before the deity (Namaskara), charity (Da'na) prayer devotion etc. will be included in this category.

In order that both the prayer and Sàdhaná may be carried on in a proper and orderly manner, the different rites are given a definite form. The particular Mantras, as also the technique of the rituals becomes, as it were, codified. Prayers, myths, anecdotes and mythologies appear. Different sects arise and the rituals acquire a tradition. We have surveyed so far how religion is connected with the material needs of life and how it arises out of those needs. But life has also the social aspect. The fulfilment of the material needs of man takes place in society ; and hence the second root of religion lies in the needs of this social existence. Social relations constitute the foundation of human life. Man cannot be man, apart from society. This urge for social existence is felt all the more strongly in the primitive community, where the entire life of the individual is directly dependent on society. The different means of living depend upon the society. The defence of the social laws and customs is essential under those conditions and the difficulties of doing so successfully demand the preparedness of the entire community to actively and vigilantly defend them. There is a greater awareness of the communal and individual dangers and of the responsibility of avoiding them. Hence the rites to be performed with the object of avoiding the wrath of the supernatural forces are enforced by the community itself. The community, unable to interpret correctly and realistically the various social events, traces their occurance to the divine will ; and social laws or customs are implicitly obeyed out of fear or love of the divine. Every community has its own deities, the forms of which are determined by the stage of intellectual development of the community itself. This conditions the nature of its religion and religious institutions. The intensity of its emotions pertaining to group life is also manifested in these institutions. The communal rituals, the secramental

meal, the initial ceremony, marriage, the mortuary proceedings, and rituals after death, festivals, celebrations of victories, tribal courts, are all such manifestations. Social laws and behaviour are thus viewed by the primitive community as sacred since they are backed by the supernatural forces. A careful observation of religious life and institutions—both of the primitive as well as the civilised communities, will thus go to show that social existence and its needs constitute an important root of religion. And therefore, the development or degeneration of the social life is accompanied by a corresponding development or degeneration of its religious institutions. For religion is based on the experience of the community conditioned by its social existence.

Religions, emphasising life after death or happiness in the world elsewhere, arose at a much later stage in the history of human society. Religion was born in order to fulfil the material needs of life ; and the life after death came to figure in it only afterwards. This happened for a variety of reasons. Firstly the rise of the idea of the soul as something different and distinct from the body and therefore capable of existing even when the latter perishes led to the postulate of a life after death or life in the world elsewhere. Secondly, when the traditional religious rites failed to lead to the accomplishment of the worldly or profane ideals, there developed a tendency to link them up with the ideals pertaining to the 'other' world. Thirdly, the human mind imagined the 'other' world for the satisfaction of those desires and emotions, the satisfaction of which here in this world, appeared to be well nigh impossible. Thus the other world is born out of the futility or weakness of the worldly life. It springs into being out of the experiences of the conditions of this life itself. Even its nature is conditioned by that experience. Thus every religion has its peculiar 'other' world, for every religion is born in peculiar social surroundings and conditions. Fourthly, in every community arose classes who saw in the 'other' world, a good and effective instrument for defending their interests and privileges. They strive to defend the framework of social laws which preserves their interests ; and can very well do so by perpetuating the idea of a divine or supernatural sanction behind them. The common mass is thus made to helplessly bow down before those laws. They blindly accept the laws that lead to their poverty and degeneration as expressions of a divine will. The emotion takes a deep root in their consciousness that

they should implicitly obey the laws and thus they may attain their well-being in the world elsewhere, whereas violation of the laws may at once call the divine wrath upon them. The standards of good behaviour, to which they are thus led to conform, are all helpful to the preservation of the existing social order. These are endowed with a divine colouring and presented as eternal and immutable. And hence faith in them and the emotions they rouse are also viewed as eternal. Both the forms and the content of faith and emotions in fact continually change. The very fact that religious institutions enjoy stability until the realisation by man of his own power to create better, higher and more developed forms of social organisations, leads to a revolt against religion and God. When social science thus starts creating the confidence in man of his own powers, the dreams of religion or god start melting away. This conflict between God and Man is an age old conflict ; and it will be resolved only when science comes to dominate social existence. This domination of science will not be a reality without the rise of a new society and in the absence of that domination, the brutality and barbarism of man will remain.

Religious institutions, seeking to regulate social life with the help of a philosophy of the world, deduced from certain ideas regarding the supernatural or the 'other' world are found, to a great extent, in civilised communities. The foundation of these were laid in the primitive life ; and they have attained their present form through centuries of development. It is to these foundations that we must turn, while discovering the sources of religion. Several scholars in the west have undertaken and performed that task so far. They have furnished us different interpretations of the origin of religion, studying the problem from different points of view. Every one of these interpretations is important. In fact they supplement, rather than contradict each other ; and their differences are the results of the emphasis they have put on one or the other aspect of religion. They are thus the results of the differences in their points of view ; though, of course, in certain cases, they arise from a fundamental difference in the outlook itself. It will not be out of place to go through these interpretations at this stage of our inquiry.

Sir Edward Tylor may be regarded as a pioneer in this field and his interpretation is known as personalism or animism.

According to it, every object, animate or inanimate, has a personality, spirit or soul in it. It is responsible for all its actions and is different from the object itself. This idea is found widely prevalent in the different primitive communities ; and forms the basis of their religion. Thus Animism is that system of thought which imagines the existence of an animus in every object.

The barbarous, primitive man subscribes to this belief. It arises from his analysis and interpretation of mental conditions like dreams, illusions or the cataleptic states. The body is fast asleep, but the dream provides a different experience. One travels far and wide, though poor, enjoys the pleasures and pomp of richness, goes hunting and so on. The cold and indifferent maiden in reality, showers favours on him in dreams. These and various other experiences in the dreams lead him to believe in the existence of a different entity or animus which lives, experiences and enjoys these different things—the experience of which is thoroughly inconsistent with the state of the body itself. This is believed to be contained in the body, the way some liquid is contained in a bottle. But it is different from the body and can enter or come out of it. It is therefore believed to be something similar to air, the mist, the shadow, or the reflection and so on. Several experiences in the wakeful state also corroborate and reinforce the belief. The dear just-departed or the enemy just killed seems to appear again; the joy of meeting the deceased is regained, he seems calling and the call is heard or the enemy that is killed threatens to avenge himself. In the cataleptic state, the different unreal or destroyed events or objects all seem to reappear, and one passes through a series of these unreal experiences. One feels like meeting the ancestors dead years ago ; and enjoys their company. All these mental states thus reinforce and strengthen the belief of the primitive man in the existence of a spirit, independently of the body, which can move about just the way it chooses. It is then styled as the existence of spirit, of ghost, or soul. These spirits, it is believed, haunt man, whether the body is alive or dead, and can do both good or harm to him. The different, happy or otherwise, events in life occur because of them ; for these cannot be properly analysed and understood by the primitive mind. Even today, in the rural areas in particular, illness in the family is being thus interpreted. Out of this conception of the spirit or the soul, were born the concepts of god, the ancestors, the demi-gods, the devil, immor-

tality, heaven, hell and salvation. It is again because of it that the primitive man imagined the existence of a spirit in the different animals, trees, rivers, oceans, and mountains etc., and believed that all that happened because of them was due to it. These powerful spirits intervened in the life of man, brought different calamities on him or gave him success. All these ideas were consistent with man's own action itself and the motives that prompted it. In order to win over these spirits or propitiate them, therefore, there arose the various religious rites. To satisfy the spirits of the dead, there arose a series of rituals like the mortuary rites, rites after death, celebrations of death anniversaries, building up of tombs, and others—all of which are a part of the cult of ancestor-worship. Worship of god similarly was the worship of the spirits that lived in the different objects of the world. Thus, in the opinion of Tylor, it is animism that forms the root of the different religions or religious rites. He has briefly formulated it in his *Anthropology* and discussed it elaborately in his *Primitive Culture*.

Later investigation and research in the field have shown that this interpretation of Tylor is incomplete. Sir James Fraser in his "Golden Bough" has discussed elaborately the religious rites in the primitive communities under the caption, "Magic." This goes to show the existence of more primitive ideas in ancient religions, than animism. Under primitive conditions, the mind is hardly developed to the extent of being able to deduce a principle, as is maintained in Tylor's interpretation. Animism, therefore, arises at a later stage of development. Hunting, fishing, cultivation or similar other pursuits occupy the mind. It has little or no time to think of other things. Such time as is left is occupied mostly by communal festivals, dances and so on. The emotion underlying the religions arising at this stage has been very ably discussed by Dr. Marett. But we will turn to that discussion at a later stage.

Dr. Malinowski in his article on "Magic, Science and Religion" in *Science, Religion and Reality* gives a different and independent interpretation of animism: All animals live under the constant shadow of death, and the primitive man is no exception. The root of this fear of death lies in the instinct of self-preservation. The ordinary mortal does not relish the idea that death means the end of everything and longs to live

for all time. This urge for immortality, the awe of death and the dislike for the end of everything is common to all human beings. The living, conscious, smiling, talking, playful individual all of a sudden ceases to exist in death. But the mind cannot grasp or bear this idea. It is disliked. The result is a terrible conflict of emotions. Life and death that destroys everything—the two opposite events create an inner conflict of ideas. The result is the feeling of hatred for death, arising in a mind full of emotions of an opposite character. Out of this springs the revelation of the life after death and immortality. And the mind almost gets convinced that death does not destroy the individual. Out of this positive feeling arise several collective actions—the mortuary proceedings or the rites after death. All individuals gather together, before and after the death. In the primitive community every individual is important for the existence of the whole and the entire community is therefore lost in sorrow at his death. The nearer ones have a feeling of consolation and their loss is rendered bearable. The rites observed by the community strengthen the belief in the continued existence of the dead. The worship of the ancestors, the sacred communal dinners on those occasions, and the different rituals in memorium of the dead, give an additional strength to that belief.

It will thus be clear that while the interpretation of Sir Edward Tylor is intellectual, that of Dr. Malinowski is emotional. Both the interpretations, however, have a place for intellect and emotion and the difference is only in respect of their relative importance. Psychology does not admit any clear separation or compartmentalisation of the two. Dr. Marett and others have argued that there exists in primitive society, what they style as supernaturalism, even before the rise of animism. But before going to a statement of supernaturalism, it is necessary to go through that discussion on primitive religion out of which it came to be deduced and established. Sir James Fraser has made a significant and elaborate contribution to that discussion. He has discussed it under three main categories, which are all so highly important that no modern anthropologist can proceed in his investigations and analysis without taking them into consideration. They are, firstly, magic and its relation to religion and science; secondly, totemism and the primitive social order arising out of it; and thirdly, the different religious rites performed for the purpose of their being

helpful to procreation, cultivation, and the rearing up of cattle.

In the first edition of the Golden Bough, Fraser argues that magic is the first form of religion. In a number of magical rites of the primitive communities, there is no idea of animism occuring anywhere. It has been introduced only at a later stage. Hence magic has been regarded as the first form of religion. In the second edition, Fraser further argues that magic is the primary stage of science. To control the forces of nature and to harness them to our own use is the object of science. The same happens to be the object of magic also. Science depends upon the laws and the uniformities of nature. It is confident that if those laws are properly obeyed, control over nature can be effective and helpful. The magician is also confident in a similar way, of the power of his technique to control nature and is sure of the qualities of natural objects, which the success of his technique assumes. Religion arises out of the realisation of the futility of magic. That the natural forces are whimsical, and that therefore we must surrender to them and persuade them is a feeling which gives birth to it. Frazer has thus tried to explain the psychological foundation of magic, science and religion, laying emphasis on the underlying similarity between magic and science and the difference between magic and religion.

The similarities or differences between magic, religion and science are, however, yet a matter of controversy among the experts. It is nevertheless a fact that all the three are found together in a germinal form in primitive society. Medicine, law, magic and religion were born of the same activity both in Babylon and in India. History tells us of the existence in its initial stages, of medicine in Babylon in the form of magic. Similarly in India, the Atharwas, mentioned in Atharwa Veda, used to perform the three fold tasks of magic, medicine and priesthood. Magic, medicine, religious rites and the rituals connected with the sacrifical fire are found intermingled or even merged together in the Atharwa Veda and the Kaushik Grihya Sutras. Even law was a constituent of religion in India for centuries together. It was related to divine acts and salvation. The ordeal was a criterion in the distribution of justice, the dispensing of which was the function of the priestly class.

The twin subjects of magic and religion were discussed

at length after Sir James Frazer, by Prof. Preuss in Germany Dr. Marett in England and M. M. Hubert at Mauss in France. They held the view that magic and science fundamentally differ from each other ; and the similarity between them is only of a superficial nature. Science is born of experience and experimentation, and depends on them. Reason is its permanent directive. It is moulded on the basis of a clear idea of the natural forces and all are free to pursue its study and understanding. Magic, on the other hand, displays features of an exactly opposite character. It exists in an atmosphere of mystic emotions and faith. Its knowledge is imparted in secret and it is fed on the superstitious beliefs of the ignorant. It cannot exist in the absence of a faith in the existence of strange and mysterious forces in nature. Hence it has a place in social science, only as a rudimentary and primitive form of religion. It is thus clear that these scholars attempted to explain the emotion or thought underlying all religion. And the explanation is best expressed in the supernaturalism of Dr. Marett. It is a principle, deduced from a close study of the religious rites and ceremonies as well as the languages of the primitive communities. The natural forces affect man in a favourable or adverse manner. On a number of occasions, they arouse the emotions of fear, wonder or surprise. It is constantly felt that there exists a strange, mysterious and unknowable force in nature, a force that can bring forth calamity or prosperity as it wills. The feeling takes a deep root in the primitive mind and gets strongly entrenched, and out of it arises religion. It is on this feeling that magic, rigmarole, prayer, deity, dogma, saints, places of pilgrimage and the holiness associated with the external material objects or the inner faculties of man, all found in the primitive as well as the well-developed forms of religions, are founded.

These forces have been styled as Mana in the Pacific Islands and particularly in the communities of Melanasia. This term 'Mana' has become quite current and popular in the sociological literature of our times. Prof. Gilbert Murray has brought out very well its precise connotation. Force, power, reverence and respect, holiness and wonder and the sourcerer's abilities are all implied in this beautiful primitive word. The hero, the tribal chief, the physician, the sharp axe on the battlefield, the lion, the war horse, the plant and the river, the mountain and the fertile soil, magic and rituals—all these are possessed of this spiritual

force. That is the faith of the primitive man. So long as these have the spiritual force in them, they prove to be effective. When they become ineffectual, the 'Mana' is believed to have departed. The cult of the Vibhootivàdà in Bhagwad Geeta, the Apoorva of the Mimamsakas as well as the Dharma of the Vaisheshikas are typical illustrations in point.

As opposed to 'Mana,' the term 'Taboo' is found commonly used by the anthropologists in their expositions of primitive culture. Taboo is a prohibition or restraint. It suggests, for example, that a certain thing should not be seen, or touched or eaten etc., in the performance of a certain religious or magical ritual. It also expresses a peculiar power of the object concerned, which accounts for its being prohibited. It is, for example, not known why the use of onions or garlics has been prohibited. The only reason seems to be that they are believed to be possessed of some such strange power. And this power may be styled as 'taboo.' The Eskimos, inhabiting the Arctic regions, regard the hunt of a reindeer as prohibited after the setting in of the thaw or the catch of the Seal in the winter. There is no reason that can account for this. A number of primitive communities view with horror incest or sex-relation between the mother and the son, or the brother and the sister. But they do not know and cannot say why. It is only fear of the taboo. Thus Taboo is the objective power of a thing that leads to its being prohibited.

An explanation of a large number of concepts prevalent in civilised communities, such as *e.g.* holiness, purity or auspiciousness can be found in the taboo. If the meaning of 'Mana' and 'Taboo' is properly understood, we get that explanation in a germinal form of the more mature conceptions of restraints, moral principles and justice. Several customs and norms of conduct are found in the different civilised communities, the roots of which cannot be laid bare. They seem to have originated in the delusions and the misconceptions of primitive communities. The principle underlying the various 'dos' and 'don'ts' of the primitive communities can best be explained in terms of the two concepts of 'mana' and 'taboo.'

It is argued by some that 'Mana' and 'Taboo' have originated in "Totemism." The ideas of 'mana' and 'taboo' are not natural and self-evident in the primitive mind. Their rise is the result of totemism. This is seen in its pure and original

form in the natives of Australia. It is also witnessed in the civilised and the backward communities of China, India, Persia, Arabia, Europe, America and so on; but not in the original form. The worshipping of the Cobra, the bull, the banian tree, or the Tulsi plant in Hinduism are all originally the results of totemism. But we shall revert to their discussion at a later stage.

It is essential to study totemism in order to understand properly the organisation, institution and behaviour of primitive societies. The primitive community is formed as a result of the coming together of a number of tribes. Every tribe regards itself as bound closely together by ties of blood, and hence it may be viewed as a family (Kula). Every such family possesses a symbol, revered and worshipped by it. It may be any of the objects around. It is generally a tree, a plant, a bird, an animal or on occasions even an inanimate object. It is taken as one of themselves by the members of the tribe. Thus if the symbol is, for example, an eagle, a lion, a cobra or a cocoanut, the respective tribes believe that they belong to the families of the eagle or the lion or the cobra or the cocoanut. The family is believed to have originated from those symbols and they are viewed as ancestral heads. They are, therefore, worshipped in order that the family may grow and prosper, and the calamities for it may be averted. The symbol, thus becomes the foundation and the rallying or focal point of all the emotions of the tribe. It stands witness to all the social and religious ceremonies and rituals of the family. Restrictions against killing or destroying and eating the bird, animal or the plant belonging to the type of the symbol are closely and carefully observed. If at all they are killed and consumed, it is done in a ceremonious manner. Around the symbol and in relation to it, arise a number of social customs. The sun, the moon, the rivers and the mountains, all of these can also assume the role of the symbol. It is this symbol that is known as Devaka in Hinduism. Different anthropologists have discussed in a detailed and elaborate manner, how this totemism arose and how a particular object came to be selected as a symbol by a particular tribe. And out of this discussion has arisen the explanations of the social psychology of the primitive communities. The well-known psychologist, Dr. Sigmund Freud has also made a valuable contribution to this discussion in his famous work, "Totem and Taboo."

A study of this form of primitive worship has led some scholars to arrive at a new interpretation of the origin of religion. In the opinion of scholars like Sir Robertson Smith, Prof. Durkheim and Dr. Jevons, for example, religion is an institution for the attainment and preservation of order in society. Durkheim has propounded this view in his well-known work ; "Elementary Forms of Religious Life." His contention is that God is nothing else but the family, the tribe, the clan or the community itself. This principle comes remarkably into light in all the forms of totemism. The pure religious faith in the Lord is identical with the sublime social consciousness. The two concepts 'religious' and 'social' are thus in fact identical. God is the omnipotent power that shapes the future of man ; and this power is found in society itself. It is the life, the soul of a given society. The virtues, ascribed to the Lord by the devotee, are found in society. What power is there around man, which, if disobeyed or defied, will punish him ? This supreme authority lies in society itself. It is believed that the Lord dispenses justice, but the nature and the dispensation of justice are determined by society itself. There exists an urge for immortality ; and it is believed that it can be attained through a certain mode of behaviour. But as a matter of fact, the individual never attains it. Permanence or unity are features of society. Immortality is thus attained relatively by society alone. What mystery is there in the assertion that religion, full of 'dos' and 'don'ts', is divine in origin ? Religious ceremonies are the manifestations and expressions of social sentiments. Religious rituals or the technique of religious rites is nothing but the socially created or conditioned means for facilitating this expression. Ideas, corroborating this new interpretation of Durkheim and others are also found in the Mahabharata and the different Smritis. But this is a novel effort of explaining, presenting entire religion on the basis of an orderly analysis and a synthetic understanding.

Considerable data can be found from every religion in support of this effort. Places of pilgrimage, festivals, ceremonies, the sacrificial fire, temples, charities, saints, preceptors, and deities are all social in origin. The individual's behaviour in conformity with the norms of a particular religion is the result of his being a unit of a particular society. No physical, or mental as well as religious act of an individual can be purely self-regarding. The Gods, hymns, technique of worship or preceptors are all

social; and represent peculiar and particular traditions. And it is from this unchallengeable fact that the above-mentioned scholars discovered the secret of religion in social life and the conditions of an orderly social existence.

But this interpretation has its short-comings. In the first place, it cannot be accepted that the object of religious prayer and worship is society or social institutions for the social soul. It must be discovered by analysing the ideas of the devotee himself. What he thinks, what he believes, what he prays or worships should be closely examined for that purpose. His God is different from society. The individual or the society believes that what they pray and worship is something different from them, something possessed of strange and mysterious powers. This something or God is beyond the material world or society and regulates and controls them. Thus the object of the religious sentiment is a supernatural force. It may be imaginary. It may be an illusion. Theology is its main criterion. And it will be an extremely difficult task to find any social meaning in theology. In the second place, it is possible to show a number of social sentiments which furnish no room for religiousity. Debates and discussions, hunts, games or races, all have collective emotions that are not religious. Thirdly, the prayers offered or worship done in solitude has nothing of the collective emotion in it at all. And finally, the concept of the social soul introduced by Durkheim and Jevons in social science smells of mysticism. Social science is empirical and has no place for any such mystic concepts or principles.

We have discussed so far three significant interpretations of the origin of religion, animism, supernaturalism and collectivism. We may now turn to a fourth one given by Andrew Lang, namely primitive monotheism. In his opinion, the beginning of religion is to be found in the rise of monotheism. A number of primitive communities in India, Australia, America or Africa are seen worshipping a single god. It may be argued that this was taken by them from the more developed communities with whom they came in contact. But that is not so. Monotheism is found even in communities that had no contact whatsoever with the outside world. The Semites who lived nearly 2500 years ago, had also among them one god for every tribe. The first tribal god of the Hebrews became later the god in their

religion and subsequently attained the position of a universal god also. It is true that in some of the primitive communities as well as in the more civilised ones, we witness worship of gods, more than one. But that happens only when several tribes have come together and mixed up with one another so that their gods too get mixed up and we witness the rise of polytheism.

The curiousity to discover the first creator of the tribe and its traditional culture is naturally aroused in the mind of the primitive man. The existence of this creator, the father of the tribe, thus comes to be postulated. The primitive mind begins to believe that He must be stronger and more powerful than all the rest. It is that power that compels them to abide by his prescriptions; so it is imagined. He thus fills their minds with awe and that awe leads to a respect for Him and devotion to Him. Thus the imaginary god becomes the Master of the future of the tribe. The postulation of His fatherhood lead to the rise of the feeling of brotherhood among the members of the tribe. His wrath brings calamities to the tribe, His favour brings them good. He ordains all social relationships.

This interpretation of Andrew Lang is not accepted by a number of scholars. There is no reason to believe that polytheism arises as a result of the intermingling of a number of tribes. Nor can it be said that the tendency to worship many supernatural forces or personalities is contrary to human nature.

Sir Herbert Spencer gives an altogether different interpretation of his own. The cult of ancestor-worship in his opinion is the primitive form of religion. In the beginning, there exists either the matriarchal or the patriarchal family in society. And the head of the family in his life-time exercises an absolute domination over all the members. Hence the feelings of awe and respect for the ancestor are deeply rooted in the human mind right from childhood. Man always tries to please him. The primitive communities, the tribes and the clans have their chiefs. And the same emotion of awe and respect are entertained in their case also. This awe is felt for the king, the tribal chief, the husband, the parents, the elders in the family or the brave even after they are dead. All the existing developed religions are born of their awe and respect for the ancestors. It was out of ancestor-worship that the worship of the omnipotent arose. In Christianity, god has been regarded

as the father, Hinduism provides for the worship of the deceased, kings, emperors and the brave as gods. Rama or Krishna are significant cases in point. The Muslims ascribe to god the qualities of a sovereign emperor.

This interpretation however is too narrow and therefore mistaken. In the Vedic period, for example, various natural forces like the sun, the rains, the dawn, the fire or the wind were being worshipped as supernatural powers.

We may now finally turn to the Marxian interpretation of the origin of religion. The interpretations stated so far, will be considerably useful to us in comprehending it properly. There are many others, given by different western scholars, which have been left out ; the reason being that they are not in keeping with the requirements of the historical method. Many of them further, are applicable only to the more developed forms of religion. It may be necessary to go into some of them briefly but at a later stage, in our criticism of Hinduism.

The Marxian interpretation of the origin of religion is a part of the doctrine of Historical Materialism. Its entire philosophy of nature and society can be expressed by that central conception. Marx has divided the social structure into two parts. One is the material foundation of a given society and the other is the spiritual superstructure based on it. Religion belongs to the latter.

If religion is viewed as it is today, it is difficult even to suggest that it may have anything to do with the material foundations of social existence. It is as far from it as it can be ; not only that, but to a superficial observer, it may even appear to be opposed to it. But a comparative study of the ancient religions of India or Europe will show that religion was born out of these material conditions.

"All religion is nothing but the fantastic reflection on men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life ;"* forces both natural and social. These forces go to mould his life. They are its foundation ; and they regulate and govern it. They continually interact with his mind ; and his thoughts, emotions and aspirations are born of this interaction. So long

* Anti-Duhring—Frederich Engels p. 353.

as they dominate man's life, instead of his dominating them, so long as their nature, causal relation and behaviour are not grasped properly by him, they produce these fantastic reflections. And these reflections, produced by the uncontrolled natural and social forces, lead to the illusion of the supernatural. Thus supernatural forces are the products of the transformation of natural forces made by the deluded mind. It is these that are then presented as the divine or devilish or similar other supernatural powers.

It is the distortion of the natural forces that takes place in the beginning in the primitive society. The distortion of social forces follows at a later stage, and therefore enters religion only when it is already in a little developed form. In the earliest stages of social development and therefore in the beginning of human history, the gaining of the material requirements of physical existence dominates the entire activity and all attention is naturally directed towards it. Hence in the beginning, it is the natural forces alone that come to be worshipped. The primitive mind, awed and surprised by the power of the natural forces, ascribes supernatural attributes to them, out of ignorance of their nature. Even the ordinary objects around appear to be possessed of mystic and strange powers. Hence the trees, the plants, the animals, the birds, the stones, the land, the rivers, the mountains, the rains, the clouds, the lightning, the sun, the moon, the ocean, the wind, the storm and the sky, all come to be worshipped in primitive religion. Magic, totemism and nature-worship arise at this stage of religious development.

These so-called supernatural forces, no doubt, influence the conditions of social existence. The backward and undeveloped mind cannot properly grasp a number of social events and phenomena. It cannot control them and hence cannot help attributing to them also mystic supernatural powers. The natural forces thus gradually begin to assume social attributes and forms. They are held responsible for the different social events. The victories or defeats in wars are viewed as their dispensation. The tribe has a chief and hence god assumes the form of a tribal chief. In the matriarchal society, the goddess becomes the mother. In the patriarchal order, god assumes the role of the father or the master. There exists this tendency of personifying the natural forces in the primitive undeveloped mind. There-

fore it believes that the rivers, the clouds or the rain are simply persons; conscious and egoistic like itself. The condition, under which the tribe lives, go to shape their religious conceptions. A warring tribe has a god who is a general. On the other hand, the lord of the ancient Abhirs, leading a peaceful existence in rearing up the cattle, was a cowboy playing on the flute. Since there can be and are innumerable variations in the conditions of social existence, there are innumerable variations of religious ideas and conceptions in the different communities corresponding to these.

When the significance of man comes to be at least partially realised, and when the social institutions come to assume a more and more important role, the different human virtues come to be ascribed to God in an exaggerated form. Thus the different qualities of natural forces and those of man get mixed up with each other, and the gods come to symbolise them.

It requires a much higher stage of social development for man to think of gods as his own images. The barbarous either ascribe to gods only the qualities of the animals or the birds or the inanimate objects of nature or take them to be gods themselves. These gods still continue to exist even in the developed communities in India. When the mind has not understood the greatness of the human virtues, when reason is on an extremely low level, the different objects in nature assume the role of deities. The famous Greek philosopher, Xenophanes has satirically criticised the tendency of man to ascribe human virtues to the gods. "The mortal men celebrate the anniversaries of the Lord; think that the Lord has a nose, eyes, hands and feet like themselves, believe that he dresses like them and talks like them. Indeed if it were possible for the horse, the lion, the bull or the elephant to draw a portrait of the Lord they would have also drawn it just like themselves." But Xenophanes did not know of the animal gods of ancient Greece. If only he knew that and, if he knew that animal worship still exists in the great religions of the world, he would not have talked in this satirical manner. It took a long time for man to progress upto the stage when he could look upon god as his own image.

When he reached the stage of realising that the different events of the world are interlinked and interdependent and that a general order underlies them all, man created a single god,

omnipotent and possessed of all virtues. The other gods merged in Him, or became His parts. On occasions, they also, being His inferiors, became His subordinates. Thus the rise of monotheism presupposes the existence of certain social conditions. When the different societies or nations start exchanging with each other their culture and its material means, when they come in contact with each other and get interlinked and interdependent, monotheism is born. It is only if the social order is weak, that all the other gods hold the field. Otherwise, they have to give way.

The existent great religions of the world are also born, in this manner, out of "the fantastic reflections in man's minds" of the uncontrolled natural and social forces. The doctrine of Karma, so important in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, may be referred to in this connection as an illustration. One of its principles is that the condition of existence of an individual, a society or even the world are the result of the doings of the individual in his earlier life ; his Karma. All the events of the present, the happiness or the sorrows are sought to be explained in terms of this principle. The Sanchita (accumulated) the Kriyamana (which is being done) and the Prarabdha (fructifying) are the three types of Karmas that determine the existence of the individual. This mystic doctrine has been completely applied to the conditions of social existence by Hinduism. The social institution of the four Varnas or the caste system is founded on this doctrine. The Sudras or the lowest castes must thus rest contented with their lot, for it is the fruit of their Prarabdha Karma. The higher castes or Varnas must dominate and rule ; for it again is the result of their Karma ; their doings in their earlier lives. That is how religion interprets their social position. The different social sciences, on the other hand, help us today in interpreting adequately the conditions of social existence and the place of the individual in society. The Karma doctrine today therefore possesses no greater importance than a fantasy ; for the social sciences have already fully exploded the so-called mysterious powers of the social forces.

Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism and Judaism are all monotheistic religions. But monotheism is also born, as mentioned above, of a distorted mental state. The underlying emotion in all these religions is : the present conditions are divinely

ordained; if we be good in this life, the Lord, in the end, will ultimately do justice to us. Thus it would be obvious that the ignorance and mystery surrounding the forces that determine the future of society have been the foundation of the faith in Divine dispensation.

So long as the internal conflict and the class struggle will remain in society, religion will continue to dominate it. The control of the religious institutions passed into the hands of the economically dominating class, ever since the rise of private property and it is they who gave religion an organised form. To defend and preserve the antogonistic interests in society has been the task performed by religion since then and thus the hands of the propertied classes have been strengthened. Time and again religion has suppressed the internal social conflict arising out of the glaring inequalities of possessions and privileges. It gave the society based on these inequalities and its laws a holy and pure form and an eternal value. The Aryans attempted with its help and on its basis, with a divine sanction, to keep the non-Aryans in permanent slavery and degradation. So did the Hindus to the untouchables or the Greeks or the Romans to those whom they conquered.

So long as man will not be able to plan his future, so long as the economic resources of the community will not be systematically utilised for the well-being of the community as a whole, so long as a planned social order will not emerge, the religious reflex will remain. For it is a product of the forces that influence and shape the future of man but cannot be understood by his reason or controlled by his action. Even in the present day capitalistic society, the sword of uncertainty hangs over the future of all, the rich or the poor, the capitalists or the workers. Depressions, bankruptsies, losses, debts, unemployment and various other evils continue to threaten all. It is difficult to do away with this social anarchy without ending the economic anarchy; and the way to it is through a 'socialistic' reconstruction of society. It is only with such a revolution, that the conditions for the disappearance of the religious reflex will be created. For, it is simply a distorted reflection of the mysterious social forces that influence and shape the future of the individual. With the socialistic reconstruction of society, disappear these mysterious social forces themselves. It is quite natural then that their reflection too should vanish.

It is possible to argue in this connection, that there are bound to remain even in the socialistic order, forces that will, to some extent at least, be beyond the control of man. For man cannot attain complete knowledge of the universe. The universe is unlimited. The contention however is not unanswerable. In the first place, man possesses today a considerable knowledge of a definite and scientific character regarding a number of natural and social forces. It is true that this is yet incomplete and imperfect. But the stage of development now reached does not permit the acceptance of any distorted and imaginary concepts or ideas as are responsible for the rise of religion. The social forces controlling the life of man are now almost completely understood. And the behaviour on the basis of that knowledge will not permit the religious emotion to remain at all ; but will lead to the rise of a spiritual culture higher and nobler than religion itself.

CHAPTER II

SOURCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGION

RELIGION OF DEFINITION.

We have discussed the general principles of the Philosophy of religion and the various interpretations regarding its origin. The interpretations that are in conformity with the historical method have alone been dealt with so far; since they are of considerable use in arriving at a proper definition of religion. But we may now turn to various idealistic interpretations of its origin. In this respect different definitions formulated by various Indian scholars will be found particularly interesting.

In India, we have an old, almost ancient, tradition of formulating definitions of religion and going into a criticism of its fundamentals. In other communities of the world, this criticism arose much later, because religion evolved and reached the higher stages of its development much later elsewhere than in India. The first universal religion *viz.* Buddhism was born in India, and universal religion is the highest phase of the development of religion. Once it is reached, various reforms may take place in religion, but its fundamentals remain unaltered. No fundamental change can possibly take place in religion once this phase has been reached. If at all a change comes about thereafter, religion thereby loses its religiousity. A higher stage of development thereafter can only be the acceptance of the scientific outlook on life and the world. And in this, the very foundation of religion gets knocked off, for it consists essentially in the supernatural form of thought, which brings it in opposition and clash with science.

The different scriptural texts as well as the Mahabharata have attempted to define religion. It is probable that the Dharma

Sutras preceded Buddhism, but the various Darshanas with the exception of the Vaisheshika, the different Smrties as well as a good portion of the Mahabharata, chronologically speaking, are post-Buddhistic. It is the discussion of religion in this literature that we will have to examine now. But before we do so, we may briefly state the general as well as the particular or specific features of religion.

Human behaviour, based on the concept of the supernatural and regarded as being of the right kind on that score, is religion. Some religions postulate a single supernatural force; others postulate many of them. This religious behaviour is both individual and social behaviour. It also connotes physical or mental activity. The fundamental conception underlying all religions is that the good of the individual, group, class or community can be attained with the help of the supernatural. To take an illustration, the concept of Vishnu or Shiva is a concept of the supernatural. The emotions of love, awe, joy, humility, or surrender, the pangs of separation, or the urge to see or to win his favour are all mental activities in relation to this concept. To build a temple, to compose hymns in his praise, to worship, to bow or to dance in his presence are all physical activities. And one who indulges in these activities does so with the faith that the good of the self—salvation, can be attained through them.

Moral values such as Truth, Goodness or Non-violence are regarded as the essence of religion in its civilised forms. But there, too, is found underlying these values, the concept of the supernatural. It may be related to the Lord, the Soul or the Karma, all of which are supernatural forces. Every religion bases morality on the foundation of the supernatural, and links it up with life in the "other world." Hinduism also regards moral behaviour as the way to salvation through the purification of the soul.

The religious institution of Yajna in the Vedas has at its roots the conceptions of divine forces such as Indra, Varuna, Prajapati, Pooshan, Vişhnu and so on. The religious principle of the Varnas in the Smrties is related to the social order. It lays down the laws of individual and social life. But underlying it all is again the element of the supernatural. The Smrties describe in accordance with the norms of Varnashrama Dharma, the effects of one's Karma after death. It is not a mere sym-

bolic, literary or figurative description. The behaviour in keeping with that code is not simply the ordinary worldly behaviour. It includes the deities, chanting of hymns or the divine fire as the essentials for that behaviour. The justification of the religion of the four Varnas as described in the Smrties is thus based on the concepts of God and Karma. The result of that behaviour is mentioned as conquest in both the worlds.*

Jainism and Buddhism are also based on this conception of life after death. Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Islam, on the other hand, emphasise the concepts of God, Heaven and Hell. The Shruties, the Smrties and the Puranas also attach primary significance to the two supernatural concepts of the eternal soul and the invisible Papa or Punya.

The above mentioned general feature of religion is equally applicable to the primitive as well as the developed forms of religion. That is exactly why we characterise it as the general feature. It may, however, be necessary to raise at this stage the question about the meaning of the supernatural. The term natural can be applied to everything that can be proved to exist either directly or by inference. Its properties and qualities can be definitely understood through experience or experimentation, and with the help of our sense organs. Things, on the other hand, which cannot be understood or examined through experience or experimentation, and with the help of reason, in conformity with the norms of logic may be termed as the supernatural. The eternal soul that survives death, the deity, the Lord who is the creator of the Universe, Brahma, Heaven, Hell or Salvation are all beyond the domain of reason. They cannot be understood with the help of reason and are therefore supernatural. An excellent justification of this contention can be found in the writings of Shankaracharya and Kumarila Bhatta. Even the reasoning adopted in the social sciences is not applicable to these principles and hence they are supernatural. There are some who try to explain these concepts in terms of reason but the effort is futile. The only method of comprehending them is through their custodians, the sages, the great souls who are omniscient the prophets, and the reincarnations of the Lord Himself. Every religious text or scripture has sought to describe the strange, mysterious and indescri-

* Ubhou Lokou Abhijayati (Apastamba Dharma Sutra 2/29/15.)

bable nature of these concepts. We shall have occasion to go into a detailed discussion of these a little later.

The general feature of religion, however, does not enable us to understand the civilised forms of religion. For that, we must go into their specific features, for, without these we will not be able to understand the historical role of the more developed and civilised forms of religion at all.

The civilised form of religion may be defined as human behaviour, considered to be good because of its being founded on that conception of the supernatural principle which is assumed to underlie all the phenomena in the Universe.

No universal principles are involved in the religions of the primitive communities. The primitive man has all his attention absorbed in getting the day-to-day requirements of his bare physical existence. The mind in the primitive stage has neither the leisure nor the ability to think about the Universe. The religion evolved by that mind is therefore limited to the requirements of its day-to-day existence. It is only in the more developed societies that the mind begins to think about life and the Universe. A religion founded upon the relations between the two is therefore possible only in the more developed communities. It is in such communities that there arise classes which are free from the necessity of toil and trouble needed to obtain the requirements of physical life, and hence arises here the mind that can think about the "greater problems" of life and the universe. The production of the means of material existence is left over to the slaves, or the other slave-like classes, for the maintenance of society at that stage does not demand the labour of all for the satisfaction of the requirements of its physical existence, and hence leads to the creation of the higher forms of religion. There are some who have necessary leisure to think about the universe and to create a philosophy of it. It is on such philosophy that the main religions of the world such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Islam are founded.

All of these religions start with the assumption that this world is a moral kingdom and religion is the law of that kingdom. The Buddhists and the Jains do not accept the existence of God, and yet accept a moral principle underlying the Universe

in the same way in which Hinduism does. The Karma, for example, in the "Karma" doctrine is not the visible human behaviour but invisible consequences of it. And it is this that has been styled as 'unique' by the Purva Mimamsa. The doctrine of Karma lays down that the different events of the world are the result of this invisible power of Karma.

The physique, intellect, mind, possessions or caste of an individual in this life are the consequence of his karma in the preceding ones. This principle of the doctrine of Karma has its roots in the Vedas and the Upanishads. The rains, the destruction of the enemy, the averting of disease, long life, happiness after death, and attainment of the kingdom of God or the ancestors are some of the objects, of the Vedic sacrificial fire. This power of the sacrificial fire (Yajna) is invisible, unique and is a blessing. This sacrificial fire is not an ordinary worldly activity but is a religious performance. And it is these performances and the principles underlying them that have been so ably described in the Purva Mimamsa. This doctrine of Karma or the fatalism born of it is not the creation of the imagination of the Purva Mimamsakas. It is the essence of the Vedas. The doctrine of Karma and that of rebirth arising therefrom, are the soul of Hinduism. There remains nothing of Hinduism if the doctrine of Karma is rejected. The institutions of Yajna or the sacrificial fire in the Vedas, Varnashrama Dharma in the Smrties, the different rituals, Vratas, and pilgrimages in the Puranas, the prayers in the Agamatantra are all founded on it. The prescriptions or prohibitions of all these works, their 'dos' and 'don'ts' become meaningless in the absence of the doctrine of Karma. In a similar manner it is also the basis of the ethics of the Smrties, the Mahabharata and the Bhagvad Gita.

The other religions of the world emphasise divine dispensation. That the whole world including the life of man moves according to the will of God is their belief. That religion is what is divinely ordained is believed by Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews and Mohammedans. The religious thought in the Brahma Sutras also emphasises this element of divine dispensation.

Let us now turn to the definitions of religion. Those by Jaimini, Vyas and Kanada are very well known ; while others given by Apastamba, Vasistha, Bodhayana and other writers

of the Smrties are also important, but they simply supplement the former. The definition of religion by Jaimini can be had in the Purva Mimamsa, that by Vyasa in the Mahabharata, while Kanada's definition can be found in the Vaisheshika Darshana. We may now examine these one by one.

Jaimini defines religion as an action known to be good and realised through advice, order, prescription or injunction. *Chodanalaxanortho Dharmah.* Chodana is advice, order or prescription and is of two kinds. Kumaril Bhatta discusses the meaning of this injunction in his Tantra Vartika in an elaborate and systematic manner. The *Shabdi* Bhavana or scriptural injunction springs from the commanding power behind the word. Some worldly or divine voice asks us to do or not to do a certain thing or things. It is a voice greater and higher than that of ours. It promises the avertion of danger or the attainment of good ; as also threatens with punishment in case it is disobeyed. This commanding voice of religion, in the opinion of the Purva Mimamsakas, is the Vedas themselves. They are eternal. They have no beginning and no one is responsible for their creation. Neither God nor man can be credited as being their creator, they exist in themselves and in their own right. There are some theistic thinkers who regard this voice that issues the religious commands as the voice of God Himself. There are others who regard the voice of the powerful sages or Rishis as that voice. In the opinion of the Purva Mimamsakas, this voice is the voice of the Vedas themselves. It is the words of the Vedas themselves that have the commanding power.

The *Arthi* Bhavana or the purposive act arises on the other hand, from the feeling that I must do a certain thing because it is good for me. Thus the injunction to do one's duty is a purposive or Arthi injunction. It is found in religious beings.

This definition of Jaimini is mostly applicable to every religion in the world. It is the firm faith of different religions, for example, that Zarathustra, Moses, Christ, Confucius, or Mohammed had a divine revelation, and they gave their message as a result of and in accordance with it. And Chodana may be regarded in these cases as that divine inspiration.

It is a contention of all the religions that the decision of what constitutes desirable behaviour does not lie with

reason, but with the divine or supernatural forces. It is the opinion of Jaimini that this desirability can be proved only in the light of the Vedas. Behaviour is desirable when it leads to the attainment of what is desired in this life as well as in the world elsewhere, or the avoidance of the undesirable. And all the religious dogmas and works assure that religious behaviour, if it does not lead to the attainment of desire in this life, will certainly do so, so far as the other world is concerned.

The definition of religion by Vyasa is different from that by Jaimini and seems to be the result of viewing religion from an altogether different angle. In the religious thought of Jaimini, the tendency to take "the word as the law" has been carried to an extreme. Vyasa, on the other hand, does not on occasions, seem to attach any importance to this tendency at all. He writes, "There are some who argue that religion is completely propounded in the Shruties; there are others who deny it. We do not desire to enter into the controversy for, it is impossible to tell everything in the Shruties."*

The criticism of religion in the Shanti Parva of Mahabharata seems to be based on reason. This thought probably might have arisen when the faith in the traditional doctrines of Shruties and Smrties was being shaken and new religious ideas were springing up. In the Shanti Parva, therefore, we get the denunciation of the sacrifice of animals in the Yajnas, the concept of devotion to one God, and the instability of the institution of Varnas. There is also a rational interpretation of the political organisation of the community and the institution of the Varnas. Social life and the Varna institution have been related to the political organisation. There is a plea that ethical principles are on a level superior to religious behaviour founded on blind faith. These ethical and moral principles constitute the basis of all religions. It is often contended that all human beings have an equal right to the attainment of their good in the other world, and the good of all living beings is the essence of every religion. Thus in the Shanti Parva, we get the noble thought that the criterion of religious behaviour is not merely the word of the Vedas, but also the thoughts of those great sages who think of the good of all wlth the aid of the reason of man.

* Shrutidharma iti hyeke netyahurpare janah; nacha tatpratyasuyamah nahi sarvam vidhiyate—Bharata, Shansi Parva, 109-13.

These are all echoes of movements of the rise of a new religion in Northern India. In Aryavarta, *i.e.* in the area round about Delhi, the monotheistic religion devoted to Narayana was gradually evolving ; while on the other side, in and near about the province of Bihar, the new religions of Buddhism and Jainism which gave an all-important position to moral principles were springing up. Hence the thought of Vyasa seems to have reached the zenith of religious thinking. The ideas of the supernatural seem to decline therein, and real existence seems to attain an important position. This thought, unfortunately however, did not mature ; it was not analysed and examined in all its aspects ; it ceased to grow. It simply seems to germinate in the Mahabharata but it does not appear to grow and blossom. For, in spite of its rise, the thought in Mahabharata was as yet not freed from the clutches of the supernatural conceptions such as those of heaven, hell, deity or karma. It is possible to show this fact by any number of illustrations even from the Shanti Parva as well as the Anushasana Parva.

"Dharma is that which establishes order among the people by Dharma alone that order can be maintained. Therefore that alone should be styled as Dharma which is capable of establishing order."* Religion has been defined in this way by Vyasa. In the next Shloka, non-violence and the ability of developing society and taking it ahead have been mentioned as its features. The object of religion has been once again mentioned by Vyasa as an orderly conduct of the affairs of men. "The rules of religion are framed in order that these affairs should properly be conducted." Here the thought of Vyasa seems to have been influenced by that of Bruhaspati and Usana. In the Kautiliya Arthashastra, while enumerating the different arts of learning, according to Bruhaspati and Usana the religious ones have been excluded. This is explained by pointing out that the object of this learning from the point of view of the people interested in the affairs of men is to induce them to behave in a socially desirable manner. They have no other worldly significance at all. Vyasa even goes to the extent of arguing that salvation can be attained only through socially useful conduct.

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* Dharanat Dharma Ityahuh Dharmena Vidhritah Prajah; Yasyat Dharanasanyuktah sa Dharma iti Nischayah., Bharata, Shanti Parva, 109-11.

This thought about religion in the Shanti Parva suggests that the criticism of religion had then reached a stage at which it could become a science of the social order. This would become still clearer from the following observations appearing in that criticism. The different treatises on social polity have been mentioned as the important instruments of religious decisions. It is contended that religion cannot be fully grasped through Agama alone. And Agama means the thoughts of various peoples collected by the Rishis. Agama cannot explain the different types of conduct adopted on occasions of dangers or difficulties. Religion changes with changing times. For example, the institutions of the four-fold Varnas and the religious conduct accompanying it have not been eternal. They arose only at a certain stage and time in the course of development and in the beginning there was only one Varna. In a similar way, society used to lead an orderly life at a certain stage in the absence of the king and the state. Society was at a developed level in the absence of the four Vedas. It is clear that several changes must have taken place in the institution of marriage since promiscuous relations amongst those belonging to the same Varna were recognised at a certain stage. It is the sinful and the greedy who have created the institution of sacrificing animals in the Vedic Yajnas. Even ultimate ethical principles like truth, non-violence or self-control are also not absolute but relative. It is only an all-sided examination of human life that gives them a value. They are not inherently good in themselves, but are good only in relation to the environments in which they are practised. These and similar other fundamental concepts are to be found in the Mahabharata. It will thus be obvious that even two thousand years ago, the criticism of religion had reached a fairly high level of development in India. The idea of the relative character of the ethical principles generally accepted as the highest form of religion, particularly indicates the comprehensively critical character of the religious thought of those times.

A question may however arise in this connection. Why not then say that the criticism of religion in Mahabharata was founded on a perfectly rational and objective approach ? The answer is simple enough. There are any number of references in the Mahabharata and even in the Shanti Parva, to the supernatural powers and forces. One may argue that these are all with the object of putting the common man on the

path of right behaviour but there is no direct basis for this argument. On the other hand, the philosophical discussions in the chapter on Moksha Dharma as well as in the Gita seek clearly to establish the importance of the supernatural and the other-worldly conceptions. It would be an outrage to the thought of the author to view these as being of secondary significance.

We may now turn to the thoughts of some of the modern scholars regarding the definition of religion. There are many who have written regarding this but it will be necessary to confine ourselves to a few cases only. We may consider the cases of some of those who have systematically presented their thoughts, *viz.* the late Lokamanya B. G. Tilak, Vidwadratna Dr. K. L. Daptari, and Mr. H. K. Mohani. We shall have a little later, an occasion to turn to the thought of Tilak. We may, therefore, for the time being, take into account that of Daptari and Mohani. The criticism of religion by Daptari is founded on reason. It has a crystal clarity about it and is systematically presented in his works, "*Dharma Rahasya*" (The Secret of Religion) and *Dharma Vivadaswarupa*, (The Nature of the Discussion of Religion). His contentions are : religion is of two kinds, pleasure is the criterion of one ; injunction is that of another. The attainment of the highest pleasure or the destruction of all pain is happiness. What is instrumental in getting that happiness is religion. Human reason alone can decide which action would or would not lead to that happiness. It is therefore possible to decide what is religious or non-religious if one thinks deeply and dispassionately about it. It is the selfless sages who can think in this manner ; and therefore their decisions are of the nature of religion, the criterion of which is injunction. Thus the first is the basis of the second kind of religion.

Happiness is the disappearance or the absence of desire. All happiness in this or in the other world ultimately possesses this form. The nature of happiness in this or in the other world is the same. And therefore the conduct that leads to happiness in this world also does so in the case of the other world. Thus even though the other world cannot be comprehended with the help of reason, religion which leads to the attainment of happiness in this world is bound to do so in the other world also.

This can be said to be very briefly the thought of Dr.

Daptari. It is possible at the outset to accept one of his contentions that it is possible to understand religion with the help of human reason. This has however been interpreted by him as meaning that the different prescriptions or prohibitions, Vedas or Smrties, are all the creation of human reason. There are various other contentions which can easily be refuted, but we may pursue this a little further. Dr. Daptari's criticism seems to be one-sided. While contending that the different ideas in the Vedas, Smrties or Puranas are the creation of human reason, he has ignored the other side which logically follows from the contention itself. Once it is accepted that the religious scriptures are the creation of human reason, it becomes necessary to examine the truth or falsehood of the various ideas contained in them. Once we begin to examine them in this manner, the illusive or futile character of a number of conceptions in the prescriptive or injunctional religion becomes obvious. It is possible for example to show a number of magical tricks in Atharva Veda as belonging to this category. The main religious institution in the Vedas is Yajna; and the principle underlying this institution is simply an endless illusion. The Vedas tell us, for example, that the *Dashapurnamaseshthi* yajna leads to the attainment of wealth, food or animals, or similar other yajnas enable us to get a son, or the rains, or the annihilation of the enemy and so on. What causal connection can possibly be established between these yajnas and the fruit to which they are said to lead? The Vedas that maintain this must therefore be characterised as an illusion and nothing else. If therefore, it is accepted that the Vedas are the creation of man, establishing of their illusive character would not at all be a difficult proposition. The villagers in the country-side worship a number of deities in the faith that it will avoid their wrath, which leads to infant mortality and the different epidemics. Why should Dr. Daptari not boldly say that the Vedic Yajnas are also of a similar nature? It is possible for him to argue that the Vedic Yajnas are prescribed to attain the happiness of the soul by destroying desire; but there is no evidence to prove that contention. Are they the creation of pure reason of the sages or do they reflect the illusive religious customs of the ancient Aryans? Ignorance of the laws of nature and the illusions born thereof are, properly speaking, the reasons responsible for the rise of these Vedic Yajnas and

the Vedic Gods. Dr. Daptari should have no difficulty in acknowledging this if he is guided by reason.

The decisions of the selfless sages, arrived at with the help of pure reason are the Smrties ; that is how Dr. Daptari tries to describe them. The Sudras should neither be respected nor enlightened. At the time of the Yajnas or in the days of famine, the poor Brahmin as well as all the twice-born (the three higher Varnas) should comfortably snatch away their belongings, if the Sudras try to pursue the vocations of the higher Varnas in times of difficulties they should be strongly and ruthlessly punished ; while the higher Varnas can follow the vocations of the Sudras in difficult times the Sudras should never do so ; and if they seek to do so, they should forcibly be prevented. The Sudra who condemns or abuses the higher Varnas should be severely punished (his tongue should be cut off) ; while if the higher Varnas do so, they should simply be warned and let off ; the Brahmin no matter what his crime is, should never be awarded the death sentence ; the non-Brahmin or Sudra cohabiting with a Brahmin woman even with her consent or marrying her, should be thrown in a hay-stack in the open and should be burnt alive ; but the Brahmin or Aryan cohabiting with a Sudra woman or one of the lower Varnas should not be punished ; if punished at all, the punishment should only be a fine ; if the Sudra deliberately tries to hear the Vedas, he should be killed by pouring molten red-hot lead in his ears, if he learns the Vedas he should be cut to pieces with a saw, these and hundreds of such other laws are found in the religious doctrines of the different Smrties of Gautama, Manu, Yajnyavalkya, Narada, Bruhaspati and so on. It would be laudable indeed if any of Daptari's followers contend that these are all decisions of the old, dispassionate, selfless Aryan Rishis, thinking with the aid of reason. The above instances have been cited only for an illustrative purpose. How can Dr. Daptari prove these and similar other injunctions of the Shruties, Smrties and the Puranas as being the products of human reason ? He must admit that any traditional religious doctrine, be it evolved in India or abroad, cannot but help defending the interest of the dominating classes.

The interpretation of pleasure given by Dr. Daptari in his discussion of religion is also similarly interesting. Tilak in his "*Geeta Rahasya*" has very ably though briefly refuted

this conception. It is contended that pleasure is the absence of desire. But pleasure is not a negative conception; it is a positive emotional state of the mind. The experience of something, all of a sudden, in the absence of any desire or urge in the mind, gives us pleasure or happiness. This pleasure may be had even when it is not actually consciously desired. The experiences of pleasure obtained through different sense organs differ from each other. If happiness or pleasure is merely a negative conception, this difference should not arise. The difference is however a matter of everybody's knowledge, and is not the result merely of our being possessed of different sense-organs. The diversities of pleasure are also the result of the diversities of the pleasure-giving objects. This will also apply to what may be called mental pleasure. The joy or pleasure in reading a poem is not the same as that in solving a mathematical equation. All this will go to show the great amount of diversities which consist in pleasure obtained from various objects. It is determined by the nature of those objects, the means of obtaining the pleasure as well as by the conditions under which the individual happens to be while seeking it . What holds good of pleasure also holds good of pain. Hence Daptari's ideas regarding pleasure or happiness are to say the least, incomplete. The absence of all desire is not the only state of happiness. It is one of several states, holding good under certain peculiar circumstances. On the other hand, on occasions, desire itself is desirable. Ambition, for example, is eulogised all over the world. Medical science suggests remedies for rousing the instincts of hunger or sex. It is only under certain peculiar conditions that desire becomes the source of pain or unhappiness.

The attainment of pleasure has been regarded as the main feature of religion by Dr. Daptari. But this cannot be accepted for, a large number of social obligations are such as bring forth pain, unhappiness and dangers alone and yet they have to be discharged. It may be argued that the conduct of any individual is guided by the desire of seeking pleasure or avoiding pain. The sages continually striving for the good of humanity and the absolutely selfish miserly persons are both prompted by this pleasure-seeking desire to their respective actions. The patriot in being hanged, also gets a certain amount of pleasure. But the argument is not satisfactory. If pleasure-seeking is common to all, it can be no criterion whatsoever of deciding what is reli-

gious or non-religious. The pleasure obtained from doing one's duty is of a relative character, for, the values underlying the different duties arise only under peculiar social conditions. The untouchable with a faith in the traditional religion and its dogmas, enjoys the observance of the various restrictions of untouchability enjoined upon him ; while one without that faith is pained by them and considers them sinful. Hence the pleasure-seeking impulsé cannot be the criterion of religion. A definition of religion would be more correct and deserve greater attention if it takes account of the totality of social good and the means of attaining it and on that basis seeks to show how social well-being can be promoted. The problem of ethics has been, it may be mentioned, approached by J. S. Mill in a similar manner.

Dr. Daptari's conception of pleasure has implications of asceticism. Pleasure has been taken by him as the annihilation of desire. This meaning is inconsistent even with the idea of maintaining a healthy social order in existence. Once the destruction of all desire is accepted as the ideal, it is necessary to reject all social intercourse as well as the idea of social reform. The greatest religious conduct then would be to somehow exist, reducing one's requirements as much as one can, awaiting the call of death, who can be the only liberator for therein is the end of all desire. All other activities become meaningless. In fact life itself is the source of all desire ; hence to be alive would itself mean to be irreligious, while death alone would bring escape from irreligiousity.

Dr. Daptari does not enter into the criticism of any of the conceptions of the supernatural in religion. Criticism of religion cannot be complete unless the concepts of deity, soul, heaven and hell, the other world and the karma doctrine are all discussed. These notions of the supernatural have all, their history and it is not akin to the history of, for example, astronomy. Man travelled from a smaller to a greater truth in astronomy, right from the beginning. The same cannot be said of these supernatural conceptions. A good part of these consists merely of delusions. The nature of these conceptions has been broadly or in a subtle manner been varying in the various epochs of history.

Mr. H. K. Mohani has discussed the criteria of religion in his work, "*Amacha Sanatana Dharma.*" His contentions may be

briefly summarised as follows: "Religion means the laws of social existence, or the rules of social order. They are the life-blood of the social organism. The concept of religion as composed of injunctions, propounded by Jaimini ultimately refers to these laws themselves. It is because of this that Purva Mimamsa is a science of society. The spiritual science is different from this social science. It considers the entities of soul, God, heaven and salvation. Uttar Mimamsa is such a spiritual science. Its basis and approach is individual, while that of the social science is society. Yajnya, Samskaras and the concept of Varnas constitute this social science or religion as the code of social order. It is necessary to clearly distinguish it from the spiritual life of man."

Mr. Mohani's insistence on differentiating between the social science and the mystic spiritual conceptions is quite acceptable. But the religion of the Shruties and the Smrties is full of these mystic spiritual conceptions. We cannot see any difference, as is claimed by Mr. Mohani, between the spiritual concepts and the religion as is propounded in the Vedas or the Smrties; on the other hand, the two seem to be completely fused together. The Purva Mimamsa for example does not give any elaboration or even statement of the laws of social life. It is more or less an exposition of the laws of Vedic interpretation. The Vedic Yajna cannot be regarded as the highest institution of preserving the social order. It is full of all the mystic spiritual concepts. All Yajnas are based on these concepts. The rituals regarded as important by Purva Mimamsa refer to the Yajnas in the Vedas. And any ordinarily intelligent person today will be able to see that all of them are abosolutely meaningless. The Vedic Yajnas represent an extremely backward state of social existence.

Another well-known definition of religion is worth mentioning. Religion is that which leads to the attainment of prosperity and salvation in the life hereafter. *Abhyudaya* is the joy in this world or the world elsewhere, and the means of getting that joy. A state in which, it may be said, the desirable predominates the undesirable, may be regarded as the state of such joy. *Nishreyasa* is salvation, the eternal and the highest ultimate aim of existence. A state in which nothing remains as desired and complete satisfaction is attained

is the state of such salvation. The means which lead to the attainment of both these objectives can be described as religion.

The chief preceptor of the *Vaisheshikas* from whose sutras the above definition of religion has been taken is *Kanada*. The *Vaisheshikas* do not consider religion as consisting in actual conduct or action; on the other hand, it is considered as the proper and holy effect of good conduct on the soul of the functionary. Irreligious conduct or behaviour, on the other hand, leads to improper and unholy effects. But this distinction is purely verbal and does not affect the reality at all. All theists and religious persons, for example, regard the effects of the religious or irreligious behaviour as being responsible for the happy or the unhappy state which comes to be the lot of the functionary. The same view is held, for instance, by the propounders of the six systems of Indian philosophy as well as the preceptors of Buddhism and Jainism. It is only the materialists like Charwaka or Bruhaspati who do not accept this view, and refuse to ascribe anything to the unseen and the unknowable. The grace of the Lord is also regarded as the result of this unknowable by the preceptors of the Shaiva and the Vaishnava schools. Thus the view of the Vaisheshikas does not come into conflict with those who regard the grace of the Lord or his wrath as the consequences of good or otherwise conduct. Of course there are differences among them in deciding what is good behaviour and what is not. But we shall turn to these differences a little later.

This definition of the Vaisheshikas, it will be seen, does not accept the ability of human reason to comprehend the causal connections between actions and effects that follow therefrom. On the other hand it leads to the conclusion that the field of religion cannot be grasped by the reason of man. The only peculiar feature of the Vaisheshikas philosophy is its comprehensive treatment of the nature of the universe and its causally connected events. This therefore laid the foundation of a rational criticism of religion. But the Vaisheshikas did not reject the unseen while actually turning to that criticism.

SOURCE OF RELIGION.

We will turn at this stage to a discussion of the means or instruments of getting knowledge about religion. There are two important views in this respect. There are some who

hold that religion can be understood with the help of human reason. It is reason alone which decides what is religious and what is otherwise. All religions have sprung from the experience and thought of man. The Vedas, the Bible or the Koran are all works created by the reason of man. They have been created by man in the same manner as several other things such as for example agriculture, polity, sculpture, magic, medicine and so on. The religious behaviour of man is similar to his other worldly behaviour in several respects. On the other hand, there are others who contend that religion can be comprehended only by a superhuman intellectual or mental activity. These superhuman means in their exposition take various forms such as for instance the divine eye, the divine word, revelation, the yogic experience which transcends the limitations of the sense organs etc.

There are differences in the formulations of those who belong to one or the other of these two schools. For example, the former can further be divided into the historical and the unhistorical. The approach of those who adopt the historical method has been already dealt with in the first chapter. They begin from the earliest primitive stages of social existence and describe the various social transformations from that stage onwards to date, pointing out the transformations of religion corresponding to these. The different social transformations were accompanied by the growth of the intellect and the mind of man and since religion is the creation of the human mind, it also had to undergo corresponding changes at all those stages. Religious experience is an aspect of the ordinary everyday experience of man. Its divine or superhuman character is simply imposed on it; it has nothing to do with the reality.

There is arising recently a school of thinkers in India who refuse to follow the historical method in the criticism of religion. In the opinion of this school, religion can be understood or discussed only by the well-developed human intellect. Controlled, contemplative and selfless sages establish religion from time to time taking into account the requirements of the society as well as the highest happiness of man. It is they therefore, who alone have the right of deciding what is religion as well as to suggest any modifications in it. It is their pure and developed intellect alone that can decide what is socially good and necessary.

What is good in this world should also be considered good in the world elsewhere. We may be ignorant about the nature of the world elsewhere ; but the criteria of deciding whether an act is good or otherwise are bound to be similar in both the cases. This contention has been very ably advanced by Dr. Daptari, and he belongs to the group of those who stand for religious reform in conformity with the principles of religion, a group recently arisen in Maharashtra.

Ancient thinkers like Charvaka, Bruhaspati and Ushana in India contended that religion arose from the human mind. Charvaka as well as some followers of Bruhaspati even went to the length of contending that all the supernatural or other-worldly conceptions in religion, all its delusions and errors had arisen out of a desire to deceive others. The religious texts are simply an endless confusion of falsehoods, contradictions and tautology.

Morality is the essence of religion. The Mahabharata amply shows the existence of thinkers in ancient India who believed that the good, born of self-control as well as concern for the well-being of all is the ideal of man. In their opinion religion does not need any supernatural or divine sanction behind it. Kumarila Bhatta in the Shlokavartika of the Purva Mimamsa has recognised this view. He summarises the ideas of these thinkers by saying that any act which leads to the good and the well being of all is religious while any act which leads to the contrary result is irreligious. One who has realised this does not require any sanction of the scriptures. Of course Kumarila Bhatta has rejected this contention for obvious reasons. Several prescriptions and prohibitions of the Shruties and the Smrties cannot stand this test. This tendency which rudely shook the foundations of the tradition of the Shruties and the Smrties had arisen in the ancient non-Vedic period and was gradually taking its roots in the Vedic period also.

The Vyasa school mentioned in the Shlokavartika is reflected in the discussion of religion in the Shanti and Anushasana Parvas of the Mahabharata. This discussion however is not as elaborate and detailed as it ought to have been. It may be briefly summarised thus. It is possible to decide what is religion only on the basis of a close and critical observation and reflection on the causal relationships of phenomena for a long time. It is true that religion can be understood through the Vedas, experience as well as

the traditional rites and rituals. But there is no fundamental difference between these three methods. The traditional rites and rituals are not sacrosanct because of their being traditional; it is necessary to take into account the causes that gave rise to them. It is essential to use the reasoning faculty of man for deciding what is religious and what is irreligious. Any assertion of the scriptures which cannot be accepted by reason is futile. Neither the scriptural assertions nor reason can tell us what is religion. The two have to take the help of each other. Even the scriptural assertions have their own logic. Religious duty cannot be understood from the scriptural assertions alone. How can the scriptures deal with the various combinations of circumstances and the various forms of behaviour that become desirable under them? How can they account for all possible difficulties? The passage of time has been responsible for the decline of the influence of the Vedas. It is only a popular misconception that they alone provide the criteria of what is religious. Whatever brings joy and happiness to life is religious duty, and this criterion is acceptable to the sages. The essence of religion is to do unto others as we would to be done by, or not to do unto others as we would not to be done by. To overcome hatred or greed, to control the senses, study, practice penance, kindness to living beings, truth, mercy, sympathy and courage are the foundations of religion. It is at times necessary to allow for exceptions in the case of even the permanent ethical principles under peculiar circumstances.

This religion in the Mahabharata thus appears to be a moral religion based on critical reason. The rituals from the Shruties and the Smrties are relegated in it to a subordinate position. It was an age of the rise of universal religion. The foundations of universal religion were laid by this thought, which transgressed the narrow limits of caste or nationality and recognised and accepted the significance of humanity. It was a great transition in human history. The various supernatural concepts like God, Soul, Heaven or salvation were harnessed to the service of an ethical religion. These do not seem to have been critically examined in the Mahabharata; they are accepted, on the other hand, as articles of faith. The authors of the Mahabharata have however linked them up with moral behaviour.

It may be pointed out in this connection that a number of

contradictory and even mutually exclusive ideas and principles are to be found mixed up together in the Mahabharata. Along with the emphasis on critical reasoning, for example, is to be found acceptance of divine authority. Divine vision, Revealed knowledge on the advise of God or his reincarnations are all accepted. There is ample corroboration of this view in the Bhagwad Geeta. Lord Krishna, who imparts the advice therein, is a reincarnation of God Himself. Vyasa similarly describes the Vedas as the eternal voice of God. Nowhere have the authors of the Mahabharata asserted that human reason alone is the ultimate criterion of religion.

The entire Mahabharata was not written at one time nor is it the work of one individual. Hence are to be found in it mixed up together the serene and the superficial, the noble and the frivolous. On the one hand, are seen the mass of spurious junk from the Puranas while on the other, serene and noble principles of humanity and the Universe.

Let us for example take the question of the origin of the Vedas and try to find out in the beginning what is said in the Vedas themselves about it. The idea of Divine or non-human origin is of a much later period. The composers of the Vedic hymns and Mantras speak at a number of places regarding their creation. Some argue for example that the Mantras composed by them are like—"The chariot prepared by the carpenter, the cloth woven by the weaver, the butter churned out by the milkman or the steering by the boatman." (Rig. 10/116/9). At another place they contend that "these Mantras have been composed by us in our minds and pronounced through our mouths." (Rig. 1/171/2, 2/35/2, 6/32/1). One of them says, "I found this Mantra," (Rig. 10/67/1) ; yet another that, "it is a result of the inspiration got from a good drink of Somarasa, (Rig. 6/47/3)., while a third one says, "I consider my Mantras as a shower coming from a heavily laden cloud." (Rig. 7/94/1). Just as the wind carries the clouds, so does my being carry my hymns. The Vedic composers however began to talk in a different strain at a later period. They began to believe that "God awakens the intelligence of the poet and helps it like a friend." (Rig. 1/37/4, 6/47/10, 7/88, 8/52/3). In the end they even came to believe that the Gods themselves are the seers and the composers. They teach man the Mantras and he

pronounces them. (Rig. 1/179/2, 7/76/4).

In the Sutra period, there arose a controversy regarding the Origin of the Vedas. Yaksa in Nirukta gives the opinion of Koutsa who argues that "the Vedas are meaningless." In the opinion of Yaksa, however, the Rishis possessed of divine powers had the knowledge of religion revealed to them and then they proceeded to teach others the Mantras thus revealed to them. A similar opinion has been expressed in the Vaisheshika Sutra of Kanada. He says that the Vedas are a product of reason. But it is reason in the form of a divine vision attained by the Rishis through pure and moral behaviour for a long period. In the days of Panini also, it was believed that the Vedas have an uncommon origin. Panini divides language between the common and the Vedic. The age of Patanjali also believed that the Vedas are eternal ; and Patanjali has himself tried to explain this belief. He says that the meaning of the Vedas is eternal though their words change from time to time. The implication is clear. The various rites and rituals, the Yajna as well as the different prescriptions and prohibitions are all the meaning of the Vedas. The words describing all these undergo changes from time to time. The priests imparting the knowledge of this Vedic tradition of rituals used different words on different occasions to communicate the tradition. The words thus change but the tradition is permanent.

The Brahmanas contain the formulations of these traditional Vedic Mantras and rituals. The priests, however, began to gradually foster the belief that these formulations, these words themselves, were eternal. The mass of people generally forget the origins of traditions ; for these lie in a distant past and gradually acquire their hold. Generally in any country the large mass of people are ignorant of the originators or origins of most of the religious customs or beliefs ; and therefore ascribe these to some divine or supernatural source. The case of the Vedas is similar.

The authority of the Vedas was explained in three different ways by the Vedic Rishis. Some of them said that "the Rishis attained a divine vision and created the Vedas." The Naiyayikas, Shaivas and the Vaishnavas, on the other hand, argued that man attained the knowledge of religion or produced the Vedas by the blessings of God. The Purva and the

Uttara Mimamsakas on the other hand held that the Vedas are neither created by God nor by man, they are non-human in their origin, or rather are themselves the origin of all.

Here arises an important question as to why the Vedic Rishis should have tried to establish the divine origin of the Vedas. It is needless to insist on the obvious fact that they are the creation of man. But why should man have shown this readiness to disown or abandon his creation ? Why should he have endeavoured to mystify such a simple and self-evident fact ? The answer is simple and it can be found in an analysis of the then existent social conditions. The origin of the religious customs and the social laws of the Aryans belonging to the three higher Varnas is in the Vedas. It was essential to put them on a supernatural or divine footing in order to stabilise and retain the stability of a social order based on the domination of the Vedic priests or the Brahmanas and slavery or subjection of the Sudras. It is on the stability of the laws, the customs, the rituals and the thought of that social order that its existence was dependent. Hence to prove its completeness and inviolability, its origin was traced to the Vedas and the Vedas were declared as eternal, self-evident and divine.

In the beginning of Purva-Mimamsa, Jaimini has discussed the authority of religion. He contends at the outset that neither direct perception nor inference can establish the authority of religion ; and then points out that the only self-evident criterion is the prescription of the Vedas. This, criterion he considers, as independent of others and quotes the opinion of Badarayana in support of the contention. Jaimini further says that the Smrties are considered as an authority because they echo the Vedas. The Mimamsakas have gone further in ascribing authority to the customs of the Vedic people, because they originated from the Vedas. Both Shabara Swami and Kumaril Bhatta have made available to us the meaning of the Sutras of Jaimini in an elaborate form. The historians put down the first century B.C. as the period of these Sutras. On the other hand, that of Shabara Swami and Kumaril Bhatta is the fourth and the seventh centuries A.D. respectively.

In the opinion of these preceptors, the Vedas explain to us things inaccessible to human reason. It is feared that the entire institutional framework based on the Vedas would

collapse, if it were admitted that the Vedas explain what can be understood with the help of reason. As Kumarila Bhatta observes, "if human reason is provided with a place in the Vedas, atheistic ideas will grow and the Vedic tradition will decline." In order that this may not happen, it is necessary to regard the "supernatural" as the only subject of the Vedas. There were a number of predecessors of Shankaracharya and Kumarila Bhatta who had defended the fundamental religious concepts of God, Soul, Reincarnation etc. ; but it was only they who tried to establish with the help of reason that these principles were inaccessible to it. Shankaracharya often emphasised that they can be grasped through the Vedas alone. The reason is obvious. It was necessary to admit that these principles were either purely illusory and imaginary or regard them as inaccessible to human reason. Both Shankaracharya and Kumarila Bhatta accepted the latter course for maintaining the stability of the traditional religious institutions and defending their own faith in the supernatural. They therefore argued that the principles could be grasped only through the Vedas. It may however be pointed out that this argument entirely collapses, once it is admitted that the Vedas themselves are the creation of man.

In India, there exist certain non-Vedic religious sects as old as the Vedic tradition itself. The various sects like the Shaivas, the Vaishnavas, the Buddhists and Jains all belong to this category. Both Shaivas and Vaishnavas believe that God Himself alone preaches religion. On the other hand, both the Buddhists and the Jains argue that only noble, pure and completely developed reason can comprehend religion. Kumarila Bhatta has proved in the Shlokavartika that the God of the Shaivas, the Vaishnavas or the possessor of supreme reason of the Buddhists and the Jains can simply not be found in existence.

The Buddhists and the Jains, having started with providing reason a place in religion, declared the Vedas to be a human creation. They even went a step further and asserted that the Vedas are the creation of a low human mind, dominated by the base human emotions ; and hence have no religious authority at all. It is only a mind, completely detached and free from emotions or desires that can discriminate between the religious and the non-religious. A mind which has shed all the emotions and attachments, which is engrossed in meditation and has thus become all-perceiving can alone show the path of religion.

It alone becomes 'Jina' or 'Buddha,' and the human mind can attain this state through well-directed efforts.

The Mimamsakas have combatted this idea. They contend that the human mind can never become either completely detached or all-perceiving. Desire or Attachment is its very nature and taking into account its natural limitations, it is impossible for it to attain omniscience.

We have discussed so far the views of the thinkers in ancient India regarding the authority of religion and taken into account both the Vedic as well as the non-Vedic traditions. The formulations of religious preceptors during the last twelve hundred years have been based on the thought of Shankaracharya and Kumarila Bhatta. They applied the test of reason while attacking the thought of the Buddhists and the Jains but suspended it while analysing the authority of the Vedas. Similarly they ignored the rigorous logic which they used in their attack, while defending their own position. If the element of reason used by both is put together, it will be clear that the supernatural basis of religion completely collapses, no matter whether it consists in the Vedas, God, Reincarnations of God, apostles or completely detached and omniscient minds.

We may now turn to the religious critics of modern India——among these, the late Lokamanya B. G. Tilak easily heads the list. In his "*Essence of the Githa*" (Geetarahasya) he has discussed in a clear neat and precise manner various religious principles. Similar serious discussion of a high order has been done by Swami Dayananda, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekananda, Ramteertha, Keshavchandra Sen, Ranade, Bhandarkar, Sir S. Radhakrishnan and others. The thought of Swami Dayananda is highly useful for introducing certain superficial reforms in Hinduism ; but there is very little discussion of fundamentals in his writings. The thought of Vivekananda, Ramteertha, Ranade and Bhandarkar is of a much higher order, but it is spread all over in their numerous speeches and writings and has not been consistently put anywhere in a single place. Dr. Radhakrishnan is now well-known all over the world as an authority on the subject. His writings show a rich imagination, grandeur of style, a mystic and romantic disposition and a highly ornamental and rich expression. But

barring his "*History of Hindu Philosophy*," there is nowhere else any logical rigour. Knowing the method of historical interpretation of the evolution of thought, he does not use it in his writings. He cannot propound the principles he wants to, in a neat, logical and clear manner; without confusing them with something else. This defect in his writings becomes quite clear in his works, "*Eastern Religions and Western Thought*" and "*A Hindu View of Life*." The writings of Tilak, on the other hand, contain all the qualities which Sir S. Radhakrishnan lacks. The "*Essence of the Geeta*" is an excellent exposition of the religious thought of the Hindus and we shall briefly examine now its central concept.

According to Tilak, "Reason, born of the realisation of the existence of the same Universal Soul or principle everywhere, can alone decide what is religion. When a man realises the existence of this soul everywhere, he becomes capable with the help of his pure reason to discriminate between the religious and the non-religious. This therefore, is the supreme test. He who has realised that the same soul which is in him is in others also, alone can decide how to behave with others. The Sthitaprajna or person with this realisation always behaves with the consciousness that whatever is good or beneficial for him is so for the others too. His behaviour is therefore, always right."

It is necessary in this connection to examine what exactly, according to Tilak, is meant by the Soul and how it is connected with religion. Once it is admitted that the soul of all is one and the same, it will logically follow that the duties of each towards all are of the same kind. Tilak on the other hand, endeavours to reconcile with this all-pervading soul, the decisions about right and wrong behaviour. This Vedic Atma pervades the entire universe, is one and the same, completely detached and beyond the domain of pleasure or pain. Assuming its existence is recognised, accepted or realised, how does that help in deciding the right or wrong behaviour in the varied and various human relationships such as father and son, king and subject, teacher and the disciple, employer and worker and so on? This detached soul, it will be seen, has nothing to do with human behaviour and its results. Assuming realisation of the same soul in gold, iron and stone, how does that alter human behaviour with

respect to the three ? And what has that behaviour to do with religion ? Human action in relation to any particular object is based on its peculiar, particular differentiating feature and not on some universal or general principle. It is because of this that under different conditions and in different societies, different individuals or groups of individuals have different duties towards each other. The universal, eternal soul has nothing to do with them at all.

It may be contended here that the feelings of oneness or difference create a great difference between various actions. Man fulfils his duties with regard to his family, caste, class or nation because of a sentiment of oneness or unity towards them. This sentiment may be narrowly circumscribed or widely embracing a large group. The wider the group embraced by this feeling of unity, the nobler are considered the duties with respect to it. Duties with regard to the community or the nation, for example, are considered of a higher order than those with regard to the family. But the argument is fallacious. For this feeling of oneness or unity is directly concerned with the results, happiness or sorrow, the good or the evil, triumphs or defeats etc. In other words, it is not at all a sentiment of detachment. It is therefore simply a tendency of the human mind ; it is egoism. It has nothing to do with the soul of which Mr. Tilak speaks. It is not the Universal, eternal soul nor is that soul even the object of this egoism. Egoism is a human tendency and is related with various worldly objects like individual, family, caste, nation, society etc. It has its growth and decline.

Seccndly the universal eternal soul has no relation with the ordinary moral norms of conduct. It has nothing to do for example, with principles of ethical behaviour like charity or non-violence. The behaviour according to these principles touches merely the worldly objects, susceptible to pleasure or pain, but the soul is beyond these sentiments and is not affected by them at all. Violence or non-violence, good or evil all are the same to it and mean the same also. It is beyond and above them all.

Thiıdly, the soul has no relation with the various rites and rituals like Yajna, worship, penance, pilgrimage, prayer

and so on. Propitiation of a power greater and higher than the worshiper is the essence of all these rituals. Once it is realised that the same soul pervades all, the need for all these rituals itself disappears. When all have the same eternal soul in them, the difference between the worshipped and the worshipper, which is the basis of all these rituals, is itself knocked out.

Fourthly, how can the existence of this eternal universal soul itself be proved? Is it to be proved on mere authority or with the help of reason? One who has faith may accept the authority. But it must be proved with the help of reason to one who has no faith and who is not therefore prepared to accept the authority. There is no logical argument that can prove the existence of this eternal universal principle or soul. This has been accepted by Badarayana, Shankaracharya and Kumarila Bhatta; men who believed in its existence. Shankaracharya has discussed this point at length in Brahmasutra, in his introduction to the commentary on Brihadaranyaka and at other places also.

Fifthly, it is impossible to establish, without resort to authority accepted in blind faith or mystically, that the state of Sthitaprajna, as described in the Geeta, and which is the central point of the thought of Tilak, is actually attainable. It is impossible to have at any time a completely detached mind. Advice is born out of desire. How can the preacher of truth preach it without desire. It will be clear therefore that the thought in Geeta-rahasya is based on Tilak's uncritical acceptance of what is contained in the Geeta on authority, rather than on its examination with the help of reason.

Sixthly, it is necessary to know the social conditions and the causal relationships of social phenomena in order to decide what is right or wrong in human behaviour. It has nothing to do with renunciation. Renunciation does not guarantee the possession of this knowledge nor does its absence mean inability to get it. On the other hand, all able people laying down the law in any social order, are full of desires, ambitions and aspirations. They have all the nobler attachments of the world; and this applies to all of them like Krishna, Buddha, Mohammad, Christ and so on.

Let us now turn to the thought of Dr. Radhakrishnan. He has discussed on a very high and serious level, the various

religious principles in his *Eastern Religion and Western Thought.*" But the formulation is mostly loose and full of confusion. He does not accept, in the case of religion, authority, of particular sects or particular traditions. And yet he generally accepts the thought of all the founders of religion as well as of the various saints and sages. Mysticism or mystic experience is the foundation of his thought.[1] Instead of explaining the inconsistencies or discrepancies in the thought or experience of the various religions, he considers them as of a subordinate nature.[2] On the other hand, he also maintains [3] that religious thought is consistent with the content of the physical and social sciences and the spirit of rationalism. On occasions he values every religion ; on occasion he considers Hinduism as the most significant of them all. At times he argues that all the religious institutions are now grown old and deserve to be completely rejected; and that mysticism is the only new religion. But on the other hand, he also argues that the new spirit of critical rationalism and scientific thought have been quite effective and should therefore be accepted. He likes the old scriptures, but rationalism also attracts him. He flirts with scientific thought but is wedded to mysticism. He is pleased with socialism which reconstructs the economic life of the community while he also accepts spiritualism leading to the slavery of millions. It is therefore very difficult to examine this muddled, inconsistent, indisciplined thought. The only good thing about it is its goodnaturedness. It has the charms of a thick, dense, disorderly forest.

Let us for example take one of his typical observations. He writes, "Hinduism adopts a rationalist attitude in the matter of religion. It tries to study the facts of human life in a scientific spirit, not only the obvious facts, the triumphs and defeats of men who sleep in spiritual unconsciousness but the facts of life's depths."[4] It will be clear that the terms "sleep in spiritual unconsciousness" and "facts of life's depths" entirely alter the known connotations of the terms "science" and "scientific spirit." It simply means that what enables one to see beyond this world is alone reason and the scientific spirit. As he writes,

1. Eastern Religion and Western Thought, pp. 82—84.
2. Ibid preface VIII—IX
3. Ibid pp. 294.
4. Eastern Religions and Western Thought, pp. 20-21.

"Religion springs from the conviction that there is another world beyond the visible and temporal with which man has dealings and ethics requires us to act in this world with the compelling vision of another. With our minds anchored in the beyond, we are to strive to make the actual more nearly like what it ought to be. Religion alone can give assurance and wider reference to ethics a new meaning to human life. We make moral judgments about individual lives and societies simply because we are spiritual beings, not merely social animals."* All this simply amounts to a view that mystic spiritual experience and impulse are of a higher significance than the scientific spirit or rationalism which investigates the reality of this world and endeavours to understand it. But it has to be regretfully pointed out that Dr. Radhakrishnan does not show courage enough to state this openly and clearly ; a courage shown in the West, for example, by a William James.

There have been a number of critics of religion in the West in recent times. It would be enough to refer in this connection, however, to only two of them ; William James and Ludwig Feuerbach. James' thought can be had from his famous work *Varieties of Religions Experience,* wherein he discusses the various religious notions, ancient and modern, of the East and the West. The discussion is from the point of view of a psychologist and naturally, therefore, religious experience and impulses figure in it more prominently than institutional religion. In fact, James himself considers "the religious field" to be partitioned between the institutional and the personal religion. Human experience itself is of a two-fold character, the experience of the visible world and that of the inner, spiritual world, of which the former is merely a part. This personal or spiritual experience is common to all mankind from the savage to the highly civilised man ; and it has a variety about it, arising partly out of the different degrees of development of the experiencing mind, and partly out of the richly varied character of the inner world itself. "The visible world is a part of a more spiritual world from which it draws its chief significance ; and union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end. Prayer or inner communion with the spirit therefore—be that spirit "God" or "Law"—is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects psychological or material,

* **Eastern Religions and Western Thought pp-82-83**

within the phenomenal world." Thus "religion includes the psychological characteristics" of "a new zest which adds itself like gilt to life, and takes the form either of lyrical enchantment or of appeal to earnestness and heroism."

All this sounds very sweet indeed. To vindicate his position, and to answer those critics of religion who take their stand on rationalism and the scientific outlook, James has also devised a new weapon—an instrument of thinking, known as pragmatism. Pragmatism offers one of the several tests of interpreting the truth of any experience or idea. According to it, all that works, that produces effects or results, that bears fruit, is true. Thus the truth of anything can be proved from its effects, its results, its fruits. Practicability, utility, capacity to give satisfactory results is its criterion. The idea of a mirage is false simply because it does not give us any results if we behave in accordance with it.

James endeavours to answer all materialists with the help of this instrument. He argues for example that the question whether a materialist or a spiritualist outlook is necessary for our existence can be settled only with the help of an analysis of our sentiments or emotions. According to materialism, this visible world is an outcome of matter and may sometime change or disappear in a conflict of the material forces. All experience, believes the materialist, comes to an end with the end of life. If this is accepted, contends James, it will mean a collapse of our aspirations of permanent happiness and our ideals of eternal bliss. On the other hand, if spiritualism or idealism is accepted, it means a faith in the omnipotent God, whose blessings can help us to have the hope of eternal joy and bliss, a feeling of great consolation to a struggling soul. Spiritualism or Idealism is therefore true because it is more effective, more fruitful.

This interpretation by James is full of faults and shortcomings, though we cannot, for obvious reasons, go into it at length here. If it is admitted that all that is effective or fruitful is true, we shall have to regard all the agreeable bluffs of a doctor treating a crowd of mad persons in a lunatic asylum as true. Dr. James argues as if the whole of humanity is a crowd of madmen or society a lunatic asylum.

The religious criticism of Feurbach deals with the various oriental as well as Western interpretations. It also includes

an examination of the fundamental ideas in the thought of a number of learned critics. It has further been vindicated by the researches in religion carried on by group Psychology and Anthropology; and is mostly contained in his work, *The Essence of Christianity.* His main contentions may now be summarised.

Firstly, the existent religious notions in the world have not been derived from any superhuman or divine source. They are on the other hand, a product of the human mind itself; and have been created through reason by the ordinary human emotions, feelings and aspirations. Unlimited, uncontrolled or insatiable emotions and the unsatisfied, suppressed or unconscious desires create the unrealistic notions of religion. Emotions and desires are the roots, ideas their manifestation and these together constitute the source of religion.

Man tries, on the other hand, to fulfil his desires or satisfy his emotions with the help of science and philosophy. When, however, these are not sufficiently developed to give him adequate satisfaction, the mind, caught in the clutches of unsatisfied conscious or unconscious emotions and desires, produces distorted and illusive experiences, ideas and thoughts. When ignorance of the laws of the universe and society prevent man from exercising the much-desired control over them, the mind overtaken by the futile ambition to control them produces a world of illusions. An effort to establish and maintain relation with this false, illusive and imaginary world is religion.

In the world of religion, unlike in the real world, are found forces which have miraculous powers, which control and even defy the laws of the material world and forces, and dominate them through magic. It is a world vaster and more powerful than the real one, because it is imaginary. Anything can happen in imagination. What is thought as good or desirable in this world but is not available adequately, can be had in plenty there. Immortality, permanent peace, eternal happiness, and virtues are all there. A civilised human mind struggles for all these and therefore mentally creates them in that imaginary world. The various founders of religion always assume the existence of what does not exist but is desired. Kantian criticism is also of a similar nature. He says, "The categorical Imperative commands an absolutely good will, a virtuous will,

a holy will. It is the essence of our moral consciousness that the ideal of complete good should ultimately be attainable, and we can only conceive the complete good as the union of virtue and happiness ; for that a creature should have a need of happiness, should deserve it and never attain it, cannot be consistent with our idea of justice. Complete good, then, involves the combination of perfect virtue with perfect happiness ; and in the progress towards this ideal we are compelled to conceive the latter following in proportion to the former."

"Now this endless progress is only possible on the supposition of an endless duration of the existence and personality of the same rational being (which is called the immortality of the soul.)....The *Summum bonum* is possible in the world only on the supposition of a supreme nature having a causality corresponding to moral character. Now a being that is capable of acting on the conception of laws is an intelligence (a rational being), and the causality of such a being according to this conception of laws is his *will ;* therefore the supreme cause of nature, which must be presupposed as the condition of the *Summum bonum*, is a being which is the cause of nature by intelligence and will, consequently its author, that is God. It follows that the postulate of the possibility of the *highest derived good* (the best world) is likewise the reality of the postulate of the *highest original good*, that is to say, of the existence of God."* The defect in this formulation is clear. If it is accepted, it will simply mean admitting that what is desirable is real.

Human idealism is reflected in religion in a distorted manner; and human nature is expressed in this idealism. It is an effort to complete the deficiencies in human nature and virtues and to provide for the short-comings in the individual as well as the collective existence. This idealism itself takes the form of theology, in a mind full of hallucinations. In all civilised religions and in Christianity in particular, God is the image of all perfect virtues. The idea of God is the idea of the existence somewhere of knowledge, morality, purity, beauty all together. What after all is the conception of Brahma in the Upanishads excepting the perfection of knowledge, happiness and truth ? Christianity considers God as the image of love and mercy, the highest expression of fatherhood. It is the collection of all human virtues like knowledge, happiness, purity, creativity, mercy, fatherhood,

* An Introduction to Kant's Philosophy,—Norman Clark pp. 279-282.

motherhood, leadership etc., that have gone to create the conception of God.

The supernatural or divine form of religion is born out of distortion of reality. It is a poetic fancy of a simple mind, a delusion born of ignorance of reality ; a nightmare or a day dream. It is, however, not based on nothingness ; just as ordinary dreams are also not an outcome of nothingness. It is simply a distorted and inconsistent form of the real experiences of this world. A confusion or topsyturvydom of reality goes to form it. If the supernatural, divine or other-worldly objects are closely and carefully examined, it will be clear that they are simply conscious or unconscious, distorted mental images of the things of this world ; the supernatural or the natural, the divine or the material.

The sweet and happy human relationships covered by religious distortions are indeed the proper religion, the noble aim. Those who consider their life worth nothing as compared to this aim and show a readiness to sacrifice everything in order that it may be attained are alone the religious. Love or harmony alone is real religion. It should be the object of philosophy to bring religion down from the heavens to this earth. John Dewey has also expressed a similar view.

The real ideal is to make human existence rich and successful with the help of science and philosophy. Feuerbach calls this ideal as scientific humanism. Religion has tried to make human life noble ; that alone is its positive outcome ; the rest is all deception. This deception has been responsible for a decay of humanity. Man needs a philosophy which would enable him to actually improve his existence here and now rather than the conceptions of heaven and hell. It is far more laudable to contemplate the existence or otherwise of man rather than about God. It is far more important to think of making the short-lived existence of man a little more tolerable and happy rather than thinking about the mortality or the immortality of the soul. Man is and should be more concerned with what happens before death rather than after it. It is more important to be concerned with solving the problem of poverty of millions, seeing that all shall be provided with food, clothing, shelter, medicine, education, recreation and so on instead of being interested in finding whether the ancestors got

them as a result of the performance of the various mortuary rites and rituals. Justice in this world is far more important than justice in the other world or duties to God.

Feuerbach is a thorough going materialist. He does not accept the existence of the mind or the soul independently of the body. He has therefore upheld the view that the entire humanity should live peacefully and harmoniously together, that all should have ample opportunities for the fullest amount of self-development and that all social slavery should come to an end. He has thus contributed to humanity's store of philosophical knowledge, a highly significant comprehensive statement of humanism with its examination. There is only one significant flaw in his thought. He pleads for the establishment of a real humanistic religion, free from all supernatural concepts. But how can an institution, free from the supernatural, be called religion at all? This is stretching the meaning of the term too far. Why not then call history a real novel, chemistry real magic, the university a real church or temple, or life a real drama? Such farfetched meanings of terms can simply create confusion and provide a good ground for opportunism.

The famous literateur of Maharashtra, V. M. Joshi, has also created a similar confusion regarding ideal and God. In his *Nee'ishastra* (Ethics), he has argued that ideal itself is God and the way of attaining it is itself the worship of God or moral behaviour. The existence of God precedes that of man and is postulated as being responsible for the creation of the Universe and man. Ideal, on the other hand, is an imagined aim for attainment by man. It is not a cause of the existence of man or the Universe. That essentially is the difference between the two. It is true that the virtues or power aimed at by man are ascribed by him to God; but the existence of God is independent of them. This is not true of the ideal. It is to be achieved; it is not self-existent as God. It is only when humanity develops its understanding that ideals replace the Gods. Ideal therefore is not God; it takes the place of God. The famous philosopher John Dewey in his *Intelligence in Modern World Philosophy* is also responsible for propounding a similarly mistaken view.

CHAPTER III

CRITIQUE OF HINDUISM

Approaches to Hinduism

There is a view current even today which regards Hinduism as a body of laws conducive to the preservation or maintenance of the order and stability of society. This view has been held by some ever since the days of the Mahabharata. It is argued that since Hinduism has as its objective the establishment of such an order, it attaches primary significance to doctrines such as that of the four Varnas; the norms governing the behaviour of families or castes; the moral principles like truth, non-violence etc.; various norms of social behaviour and so on. The worship of the supernatural, the divine or the spiritual occupies in Hinduism a subordinate position. Some of these thinkers carry the argument still further and point out that the conceptions of God, the other world, reincarnation, deity, apostle etc. are simply symbolic and have been devised in order that the common man may obey the laws. The fear or temptation of the other world induces him to do so.

There are others who argue that Hinduism shows the way of attaining the good in this as well as in the other world. The Shrutis, Smrties and the Puranas preach its doctrines so that man may live comfortably in this life and attain well-being after death. It is with this object that the doctrines of the four-fold Purusharthas or three-fold Varnas have been preached in the Mahabharata and the Smrties. The religion in the Smrties has as its object the enabling of man to attain well-being and salvation *i.e.* good in this and the other world. It says for example, that proper observance of the rules of "Grihasthashrama" enables one to lead a happy family life as well as

through purification of the mind, facilitates the attainment of salvation.

Besides the above two, there is a third view also, which regards Hinduism as a pure religion of the spirit. Its principle purpose is to show the way to Nirvana, salvation or the other-worldly well-being. Wealth, desire, preservation of the individual, or society are all its subordinate objects. They are meant for the simple, undeveloped, child-like beings. As a matter of fact, the being is on a pilgrimage to salvation. This life or material existence is simply a halting place or a Serai on the way. The real task of Hinduism is to show the way to spiritual well-being or salvation. The Vedantins, Shaivas or Vaishnavas as well as the modern spiritualists, all hold this view and defend it.

Of these three, the first view is simply untenable. It is only the latter two that describe Hinduism more or less realistically in the form in which it exists today. The sense in which the first view regards Hinduism as conducive to social stability and order is wrong. In the thought and life of the Hindus from ancient times to date, there never existed religion in that sense. Barring a few exceptions, the founders, preceptors, or scriptures of Hinduism have always preached doctrines thoroughly inconsistent or even opposed to that view. The Vedic Yajnas or rituals are all worship of God. The Upanishads also speak of Brahma, Soul, salvation, immortality and numerous other spiritual concepts. The Smrties too, in the light of the spiritualism of the Vedas, speak of the Varnas, Ashramas or other social behaviour ; and in the same manner do the Puranas regarding rites, pilgrimages and prayers. It is true that underneath this shell of spiritual sentiments or emotions are concealed the nature and norms of material existence. But the spiritual conceptions are not merely symbolic; on the other hand, according to those who propound them, they are the reality.

Some of the champions of the first view contend that the Vedic religion *i.e.* religion from the Rigveda is concerned with the things of this world and the time has now come when it should be upheld. The Vedic literature is full of prayers for material objects like health, long life, power, bravery, triumph, fame, knowledge, happiness, rains, animals, grains, gold, and so on. The deities in it are simply material forces ; and the

Vedic religion is materialistic in its content. The impulse to work for the betterment of the material lot of the Hindus can thus be had from the Vedas. They show the way to well-being in this world; while Vedanta is spiritualistic in content. In order to rise from their present defeated and decadent stage, it is necessary for the Hindus to reject mystic, spiritualistic or devotional doctrines from the Puranas or the preachings of the saints and endeavour to establish the old Vedic religion. The religion of the Smrties or the Puranas has got to be now reformed. Every Hindu should now be guided by the slogan, "Back to the Vedas."

There are fallacies in this view. A religion which emphasises the material objects of this world definitely represents a backward primitive type of social organisation. Modern psychology has now clearly established that such religions arose in the early primitive communities. On the other hand, the religions emphasising the spiritual arise in more civilised and developed societies. The former type of religion believes that gods have a hand in the ordinary material affairs of man; that the desired can be obtained only through their favour or blessings and that all evils or dangers are a result of their wrath. It is thus based upon the faith that the operation of material forces is controlled by some whimsical supernatural element. It is a religion born out of ignorance of the causal relationships of the ordinary material events or phenomena; and thus constitutes a positive danger to those who desire the spreading of the scientific outlook or thought; it is exactly the opposite of scientific thought. After all, who were being prayed to in the Vedas for the sake of material prosperity and well-being? The various deities and gods. These are certainly not material objects; they represent material forces deified by deluded minds and thus made into conscious and intelligent beings. The material forces neither listen to prayer nor confer blessings as a result of them. Does the tree bear fruit when prayed to? Does the engine or machine work because of prayers? The same is true of the forces of nature. The various actions leading to material well-being according to the Vedas are the citing of the hymns, Yajnas and so on; and the Vedic people believed that these lead to the propitiation of the spiritual forces, whose blessings can bring material well-being. Magic, Mantras and similar other things have also been devised by man for the sake of material benefits; and faith in them is the same

thing as faith in the Vedic rituals. It is an indication of the primitive, simple, undeveloped mind ; for the idea of causation in it is based on complete ignorance of real causal relationship. As compared to this Vedic natural religion, the other-worldly or spiritualistic religion definitely suggests a higher stage of development. The latter definitely recognises the proper causal relationships in the affairs of this world. Religion is simply considered therein as purifying the mind and thus helping to attain salvation, but for objects of this world, it is essential to cultivate the arts of agriculture, sculpture, architecture, trading, and polity and to conform to the norms of moral behaviour. It was only after the decline of the Vedic religion that the various branches of learning and systems of philosophy were born in India. Towards the end of the Vedic period, arose the Upanishads, which made revolutionary changes in Vedic thought, and opened up the way for further spiritual progress.

It is only the second view, which takes into account the requirements of both this and the other world, that gives us an adequate and proper idea of Hinduism. It is said in one of the Puranas that the religious texts indicate certain means of spiritual good, certain others of material good and yet certain others of both. The former has been styled as Adrishtartha while the latter as Drishtartha. Drishta means seen and Artha means result or fruit. Drishtartha are therefore the means, the fruits or results of which can directly be understood ; as for example, agriculture, sculpture, trade, warfare or polity. The religious texts prescribe the ways in which these are to be practised and he who breaks them is bound to suffer, may be, inperceptibly. The Adrishtartha, on the other hand, are the means, the results or fruits of which are unseen. Here the relation between the means and the ends cannot be grasped either directly or inferentially *i.e.* through the use of human reason. It can be learnt only from the scriptures. It is only one with faith in the scriptures who will admit that the above deeds lead to results like rains, the birth of a son, the avoidance of disease, the destruction of the enemy, birth in a noble family or salvation. In this unseen causation are implicit the conceptions of heaven and hell, God and Satan, salvation, soul and rebirth. These are the proper objects of religious faith. The means pertaining to both of these types are those in the case of which the relation between the means and the ends is both seen and unseen as

for example, the laws of marriage. Sex pleasure and procreation are both seen results of these while on the other hand the attainment of the ancestral heavens or discharge of obligations to the ancestors are the unseen results. The unseen relation between the means and the ends itself amounts to grace or wrath of God.

Some of the modern defenders of religion, interpreting the concepts of duty or deviation from duty prescribed by God, argue that the behaviour of an individual, which, on a long-period view, can be definitely said to lead to the benefit of that individual or of the society of which he is a part, may be considered as duty. It is possible to decide them only on a deep and careful study of the many-sided reality. A mind, not accustomed to such study, can see only the immediate good or well-being as well as the immediate harm ; and hence the rules can be laid down only by thoughtful and meditative sages. The unseen means cannot be grasped by narrow, undeveloped minds. Actions leading to immediate good, on a careful long-period view, are often found to do more harm than good ; and hence the thinkers or seers consider them as being sinful.

Religion tells us that charity, truth or non-violence are the root of other-worldly happiness. It also advises us to abide by the order of the Ashramas and control the senses. The Mahabharata says that he who behaves with all with the consciousness that they are also the embodiments of the same soul, alone can attain eternal happiness. All the Smrties clearly argue that violence, appropriation of what belongs to others or illicit relationship with any woman lead to the fall of man. If we carefully view life as a whole, it will be clear that the observance of the above rules is no doubt conducive to social well-being ; while their transgression will lead to harmful results. People who do not exercise self-control either die early in life or are affected by various diseases. Experience bears this out. Therefore duty or sin can be indicated to man through experience or meditation, independently of faith. And religion has been propounded by those who could see these indications, interpret experience and meditate upon it.

This view is not quite tenable, for it is a half-truth. It is true that the norms of religion have been laid down by the wise and leading individuals in society. But the upholders

of this view do not interpret the term "Adrishta" correctly. For example, it cannot be said that the concepts of duty or sin, when it is said that the one leads to higher birth or heaven after death while the other to lower birth or hell, have their connotation determined through the application of the norms of logic by human reason. Reason cannot establish the good results obtained in this or the other world through Mantras, Yajna, Japa, or worship. It is only on the assumption of the existence of the supernatural forces like Gods, stars, demons or the power of the shastras that the various religious rites and rituals have been prescribed. If this is not admitted, most of them will appear as vain and meaningless. As a matter of fact, it is only people with a blind faith in them, who have laid down the various religious prescriptions ; and a frank admission of this alone can be helpful to the future progress of the social order.

A good part of the religious texts of the Hindus has been written by people with blind faith in the supernatural. Not only that, but conscious defenders of the dominating class interests can also be said to have a hand in it. There are texts written by people desirous of keeping the Sudras as the slaves of the three Varnas. To keep the Sudras in slavery, to retain the domination of the three Varnas and to have for the priestly class a predominating voice appear to be the three-fold principles underlying the social order described in them.

The third view which considers Hinduism as a purely spiritual religion is a result of the developments in Hinduism itself. It does not therefore present a complete picture of the real nature of Hinduism. It is true that it deals with an important aspect of it and in modern times it is this view which appears to exercise a considerable hold over the minds of a majority of Hindus, including the educated ones.

It is one of the outstanding social duties of our times to combat this view ; for, without that, the main difficulty in the way of a critical understanding of material as well as spiritual life of the Hindus in our own times will not disappear. The criticism of heaven is the beginning of the criticism of the Earth ; that of religion is the beginning of the criticism of justice, right or authority. Underneath this spiritual—other-worldly garb is concealed the reality of this world ; and the illusion produced by the former has led to self-deception as well

as the deception of others. With the help of these illusions, the free and subtle imagination often paints attractive pictures of the powers of the supernatural forces, pictures which conceal the hideous reality of this world. Against the background of a serious but empty philosophy devoid of all truth, is built up the edifice of these illusions. Unless they are all shattered, the thought that teaches us to combat the hideousness in life cannot grow, nor can actions aimed at combatting it, fructify. This otherworldliness or spiritualism is a dark curtain that covers successfully the sorrows and tears of millions of suffering Indian humanity. It is for them indeed a poor consolation, moonshine, a mirage. Unless this quest of an illusory world is stopped, it will not be possible to grasp the real significance of freedom and well-being. The way to a happy, healthy and harmonious social life will not be opened up unless the utter futility and falsehood of heaven is clearly exposed.

Let us now turn to a definition of Hinduism. A number of modern learned Hindu scholars find it difficult to point out what exactly is the peculiar feature of Hinduism that differentiates it from other religions. For Hinduism is a curious mixture of numerous religious forms and conflicting and contradictory tendencies. It has two important aspects. Peculiar social customs or laws of social life is its main aspect or feature ; and various inconsistent or even conflicting spiritual sects is its other aspect. The definition of other religions in the world like Christianity or Islam can be deduced from their spiritual or other-worldly side ; and it is needless to look to their social character while deducing it. Under the external cover of every religion are to be found a peculiar social structure and social laws ; but in the case of a definition of Hinduism, it is this aspect which easily comes into prominence. The four-fold Varnas, the caste system, the marital rituals, the norms of family or caste life, the laws of succession or the joint family system all represent the social side of Hinduism. Hinduism thus means the laws or rules of a particular social structure. This peculiar social structure is founded on the Varnas and the castes. During the last two thousand years and more, Hinduism has always meant the religion founded on the caste system. A Hindu is a pure and proper Hindu when he abides by the laws governing his caste. Of course, behind all these social customs of the Hindus, there do exist spiritual or other-worldly notions. All

religious texts, for example, have amply used the concept of rebirth and the doctrine of Karma to defend all the laws of this social structure. On the other hand, the spiritual or other-worldly sects among the Hindus are founded on various conflicting notions and it is futile, no matter how much one tries to do so, to think of introducing any consistency in them.

The late Lokamanya B. G. Tilak has defined Hinduism as "Faith in the Vedas, variety in the means and indefiniteness of the objects of worship." This is indeed a highly significant definition for it clearly shows the utter absence of any definite, orderly, consistent, positive other-worldly basis for Hinduism. The term "Faith in the Vedas" indicates that all the Hindus accept the authority of the Vedas. But in the Hindu society, at least 70 per cent of the people have no right to study and know that authority or have their social customs and laws ordained according to it. How can they then have faith in the Vedas ? They have no right even to listen to the Vedas; not only that but such listening on their part has been considered as sinful for which they are doomed to hell. It is therefore quite meaningless to say that they have faith in the Vedas. "The variety of means" or "indefiniteness of the objects of worship" cannot be components of a definition at all. Every particular sect of Hindus such as the Shaivas, the Vaishnavas and so on, have their peculiar means and peculiar objects of worship ; and there is no uniformity regarding these so far as all the Hindus are concerned. But this negative feature cannot furnish us with a definition. In an endeavour to define something, we have to state its positive feature which pervades it completely and is all its own and cannot therefore be found anywhere else outside it. The "variety of means" or "the indefiniteness of the objects of worship" simply proves that there is nothing like a particular religion of all Hindus, known as Hinduism. There are several religions of the Hindus and there is no consistency amongst them.

The caste system is an important positive feature of the Hindu social order. The vast majority of Hindus barring a few exceptions order their behaviour according to it. Even these exceptions like Prarthana Samaja or Arya Samaja have in their fold people who recognise the caste system and abide by it. While Jainism does not recognise castes, the Jains recognise them. Even amongst the Christians and the Muslims in India

there are many who accept the caste divisions. Even they have been influenced and affected by this outstanding principle of Hindu social life.

It is extremely difficult to describe comprehensively the nature of Hinduism by trying to find out its common feature; for it is not a phenomenon which can definitely and consistently be described. It is far too complicated and many sided for such a description. In order to understand it fully, therefore, it is necessary to go into its various peculiar forms under different circumstances. It is not logically quite sound to search for a common feature of such a disorderly object and it will be better if we therefore try to examine its various forms found at different stages of its development.

Hinduism is not a thing based on certain particular spiritual or other-worldly thought. It is, on the other hand, a collection of different social laws and customs and there are, further added on to these, various mutually inconsistent and contradictory spiritual notions. Hinduism does not consider the social customs or laws as merely "things that are Caesar's" but ascribes to them a spiritual value and sanctions. The customs pertaining to marriage, those of various castes and sub-castes, the behaviour of the sexes, the laws of succession, the life of the widows or the taboos regarding food and drink all have a religious significance. The caste system no doubt is its outstanding feature but even there it is difficult to describe it properly. For example, though a number of castes recognise the supremacy of the priests and accept the Brahmins as priests, there are some which have priests from amongst themselves or the non-Brahmins. Though Islam or Christianity are different from Hinduism, there are Hindus who worship the Christian deities or the Muslim Pirs. All these things simply indicate that Hinduism often attaches a far greater significance to social customs rather than to the idea or behaviour in worship. It is necessary therefore, to examine historically this religion which is so full of various conflicting spiritual ideas. In analysing and examining it in this manner, we shall discover in it various primitive or developed layers.

NATURE OF HINDUISM

The historical method does not attach the same significance to the different religious conceptions in the course of social evolu-

tion. Just as society passes through the various primitive or civilised forms of social development, it gives rise to various primitive or civilised religious notions. The worship of objects like the trees or the stones or that of ghosts, magic or sacrifice of man or animal in Yajna are all features of a primitive religion. In a more developed society, we have monotheism. In Hinduism are to be found these various forms. Even the other monotheistic religions like Christianity, Zoroastrianism or Islam have in them the relics of religious notions of a backward undeveloped society. But monotheism has successfully eclipsed or concealed these earlier and more primitive forms. These monotheistic religions arose to shatter and destroy the primitive religious notions and forms. But they could not succeed in this beyond a limited extent. The greatest measure of success has been attained by Islam. Hinduism, on the other hand, was not very successful in this respect ; rather it failed ; and the proof of that failure is its present form. The most primitive or barbaric forms are to be found prevalent in it ; on occasions they are even highly revered and respected ; and are sought to be defended with subtle and sophisticated arguments. Orthodox scholars have shown this tendency to seriously defend these primitive features, which have been still sticking on to Hinduism and have thus practised self-deception.

Religious notions at three different stages in the development of religion are to be found in Hinduism. Of course, besides these, there are various others belonging to various levels in each of these stages. But for the convenience of our discussion, we can safely take this three-fold division ; (i) magic ; animism, ancestor-worship or worship of ghosts and demons ; (ii) worship of deities imagined in the image of man and worship of power ; (iii) monotheism, the doctrine of Brahma, pantheism and philosophical religion.

Magic, the earliest form of religion, is found in almost all the primitive communities of the world. Even in the modern civilised societies, it is seen in existence in the backward strata of the community. It is a very primitive form of religion ; and has at its root a complete ignorance of the causal relationship of phenomena. Magic generally is of two kinds ; one that precedes theism and the other succeeding the theistic religion. Both of these are found in Hinduism. Magic has a place in

the religion of the Atharvaveda and the Grihya Sutras. It also finds a place in the rites prescribed in the other Vedas. Some of the Yajnas are like magical acts or have relics of these in them. They are to be performed for getting rains, destruction of the enemies, avoidance of disease etc. There are certain magical rituals or Yajnas named Abhichar as prescribed in the Vedas. The rites accompanying the attainment of maturity or conception also fall in the same category. Magic is Sadhana. By Sadhana is meant the use under particular conditions, of particular rites, objects or Mantras, believing them to be possessed of supernatural powers, for the purpose of attaining the desired or avoiding the evil. Even the medical remedies of the earlier times, based as they were on ignorance of the properties of the various objects, had an element of magic in them. Some of the remedies in Atharvaveda and the Grihya-sutras are of this kind ; and magical herbs and mantras have been stated in them.

The other relic of primitive religion in Hinduism is nature-worship. The worship of the various natural objects like stones, mountains, rivers, trees, animals etc. comes in here, on the basis of a faith that these objects possess some supernatural powers. In Hinduism, for example, we have the worship of stones and pebbles, of mountains, of rivers like the Ganges, of trees like the Banyan or 'Pimpala', of animals like the cow or the monkey, of heavenly bodies like the Sun and the Moon ; of natural elements like fire, wind or the rains. And this still persists ; even in the monotheistic devotional religions which prescribe the worship of these objects as symbols. Originally, however, they were not considered as of symbolic significance but were worshipful in themselves. The trees like the Pimpala or the Banyan still continue to be worshipped in the original sense ; and the Puranas have linked them up with various deities in the developed forms of religion. But their existence as worshipful objects is an independent existence. The cobra and the cow still remain as independent objects of worship. Though the fish, the tortoise, the lion, the tiger or the eagle are no longer themselves worshipped, the worship of their images still continues. The Sun and the Moon still enjoy an important worshipful position. Even outstanding leaders of the Hindus like Pandit Madana Mohana Malaviya still preach the worship of the cow or the Tulsi plant as an important feature of Hinduism.

This natureworship arises in the form of primitive totemism. It is born out of a faith that particular natural objects or animals are possessed of powers for good or evil ; a faith based on complete ignorance. There is, for example, an idea in the Rigveda and the Atharvaveda that the sight of a crow or a pigeon is indicative of death. In the Smrties also, there is a belief that the sight or touch of particular objects or even persons belonging to particular castes is either purifying or polluting. Thus the concepts of Mana or Taboo, found in the primitive communities, are still seen lingering in Hinduism. There is ample evidence of this in the Shruti literature. The taboos concerning food as well as touch in the Smrties are all indicative of this.

In Hinduism, certain natural objects or their images have been considered as worshipful, while the worship of certain others is a result of the influence of the later, more developed forms of religion. For example, the eagle, bull or the ape are cases in point. The eagle or bull worship comes in because of their being the vehicles of Vishnu and Shiva respectively, while the ape is worshipped as the messenger of Rama. As a matter of fact they were considered worshipful in the beginning quite independently of these factors. The bull is still independently worshiped by some Hindus. The same holds good in the case of the monkey, who is worshipped as Hanumana. The worship of tree, the Sun, mountain, river and the stars still continues almost in the same form in which it existed in the earliest times.

It has been already pointed out that this worship originates in the most primitive times. It arises out of a belief in man that the beasts or the birds around him are more powerful than himself. When man realises his position in nature as superior to the other animals, the worship of animals, deities possessed of power, symbolised through the possession of limbs or organs, begins to decline. Man has created these various deities possessing the limbs of the ape, the lion, the elephant etc. before realising his own importance. On the other hand, nations or societies which had attained a certain amount of stability, created gods in man's own image and endowed them with various human qualities. Thus god was created by man with his reason, in his own image, when he realised his superiority over the animal kingdom. Human society had to pass through centuries

of development, before human triumphs came to be attributed in an exaggerated form to Gods. Man then began to imagine the deities of various animals, birds, rivers etc. as being possessed of human qualities, while retaining their externals.

The worship of natural elements like fire, wind or rain arose similarly out of an ignorance of causation. These deities were created out of a failure to causally interpret natural events like wild fires, the blazing sun, stones, draughts and floods, high or low tides, sunrise and sunset etc. A proper and correct interpretation of these events was impossible in the absence of science ; and therefore man had to carry on with his numerous deities or one God. The only way open to him under those conditions was to pray, to worship, to perform Yajna ; and that became his religion.

Ancestor worship or worship of the dead is also to be found in Hinduism. The existence of the youngster in the family depends upon the elders ; the latter alone provide him with the equipment for life. They therefore naturally dominate and influence him. The death of the elderly person is therefore a big calamity naturally felt by everyone in the clan or the family. The feeling prevents them from accepting the idea of the complete end. The existence of the elders is felt to be there either in dreams or in solitude. When the group is overtaken by a calamity, it is regarded as the result of some unfulfilled desire of the dead. The survivors thus entertain the desire to fulfill the wishes or desires of the dead. Out of it arises animism. The worship of the dead is born out of the belief that in the body there exists some entity like it, but independent of it and it survives the body after death. It is this very idea that underlies the faith in ghosts of various kinds believed to exist according to some of the Hindus. The concepts of deity or rebirth also arose out of it. The belief that mountain, river or tree, for example, have some such entity in them is also born out of this faith.

Hinduism attaches great significance to the mortuary rituals and the 'Shraddhas' of numerous kinds. There are Yajnas which are also based on these rituals. These 'Shraddhas' are also performed by the Hindus when they visit places of pilgrimage like Benares, Gaya or Prayaga (Allahabad). The custom of worshipping the dead kings, noble men or priests was also widely prevalent in ancient Egypt. In Hinduism also, hero-worship

of Rama, Krishna, Jina or Buddha is simply a higher form of this worship of the dead.

The law of succession in Hinduism is closely connected with 'Shraddha'. One of the principle objects of the successory right according to the Smrties, is the performance of 'Shraddha'; and the purity of the family is also to be preserved for the same purpose. According to some of the Hindu religious texts, the property of the family is mainly meant for the performance of 'Shraddha'; and one who does not perform it should not be allowed to inherit it, say the Smrties. This ritual has contributed a great deal to the preservation of the caste system, because it is closely connected with the purity of the family.

The ancestor-worship prevalent among the Hindus has also influenced the idea of God. A number of religions in the world regard god as the mother, the father or the king. In ancient times, the chief of the gens or the clan used to be considered as the king or the father. Similarly the worship of mother earth is also prevalent among the Hindus since the earliest times. The worship of a Goddess is fairly old and the Goddess is generally regarded as Mother.

We have discussed so far the earliest and the most primitive forms of religion in Hinduism. Along with them exist the relatively more developed forms also. One of them is the faith in numerous deities, created in the image of man. There is an important place in Hinduism to the thought that beyond the visible objects of the world, are certain invisible superior powers; that these are like human beings, possessed of human qualities and they control all the various material objects ; and that behaviour in conformity with their desires leads to well-being in this and the other world.

The various Gods in Rigveda like Indra, the Sun, the Varuna are not merely the powerful elemental forces of nature, but the Rishis have also attributed human qualities to them all. Indra is a brave and powerful king. The Sun or the Varuna are the law givers and the dispensers of justice. The various human qualities such as art, knowledge, mercy, charity, piety, joy, bravery, love, hatred, anger and so on are to be found in them in perfection and they can be won over through devotion. The various Gods in the present day Hinduism like Rama,

Krishna, Hanumana, Shiva or Ganesha are also of a similar type. They have all the virtues and even the vices of man. They are proud, jealous, whimsical, full of hatred and amenable to flattery. The Yajnas in the Vedas, the various sacrificial or holy fires in the Smrties or the rites and the rituals in the Puranas have all been devised to please them and when pleased, they can be made to perform any miracle. The Vedic Gods are pleased by the sacrifice of the goat, horse or the cow ; or the offerings of bread, ghee and rice. The Gods from the Puranas are pleased through the offerings of Tulsi, grass or water, for they are the Gods of the poor. They are extremely happy when offered sweets, a palace, a bed, flowers, etc. and confer boons. The devotee can then have any miracle performed by them.

In Hinduism, there are found still more developed concepts of Gods. These are the emotional contents of the objects and they too are worshipped. The life or consciousness for example, is imagined as a God in the Vedas. Indra is the God of power, Varuna of Empire, Savita or the Sun of command ; Saraswati the Goddess of plenty or learning, Shree, the Goddess of all the virtues in their perfection. (Shatapatha Brahmana *ii*). Prajapati is the Lord of procreation, Brahma of creation, Vishnu of preservation or protection, Rudra of destruction. Here God takes up a more subtle character.

Hinduism, attributing human qualities to Gods, has been described in the Shruties, Smrties and the Puranas. A religion, suggesting devotion to them all, establishing harmony between them or making one of them supreme and worshipping it, is found in a developed form in the Rigveda. Various religious sects, worshipping different deities arose in Hinduism and they have their peculiar marks, dress, rules of behaviour among themselves, and notions of purity or pollution.

In Hinduism is to be found further a more developed form of religion which consists of the spiritualist doctrine of the Brahma, monotheism and a philosophic religion. The doctrine of Brahma implies that all the deities are contained in a single all-pervading principle, and are parts of it. Everything arises out of that single principle and ultimately vanishes in it. It is a principle pervading the entire Universe. This is known as the doctrine of Brahma. This arose in the 10th Mandala (chapter) of Rigveda and attained its full development in the Upani-

shads. This Brahma is more subtle than the human soul of the omniscient and omnipotent God. The man who has known it can be said to have attained the highest. Self-control, peace of mind or generosity are more essential for its knowledge than the rituals. It is not a person but a principle, and hence more subtle than God, which is responsible for the Heavens, the salvation, the good or the evil results of one's actions.

Monotheism, which is a higher form of religion, is also found in Hinduism. The view that there is only one God who controls the Universe and all else is a result of his dispensation is Monotheism. The Shaiva and the Vaishnava sects believe in this. To devote oneself completely to Him or to fully surrender to His desires is the only way to Salvation. Truth, non-violence, mercy or self-control facilitate such devotion and are therefore the essence of religion. In the Upanishadas also is to be found on occasions the idea that the favour of God leads to happiness and salvation while His wrath is responsible for sorrows, sufferings and degeneration. (Chandogyopanishad and Shwetashwataropanishad). The monotheistic sects are non-Vedic in their origin. There existed such sects, inconsistent with the Vedic rituals as well as the path of knowledge preached in the Upanishads in ancient India. The various monotheistic sects like Vaishnavism, Shaivism, or the Shaktas arose out of these. Even the Bhagavad Gita was written after the Vasudeva sect was reconciled with the Vedic teachings.

The other developed form of religion in Hinduism is philosophic in character. Its earliest form is the Kapila and the Sankhya schools. These do not accept the existence of God. According to them, the soul of man attains salvation by recognising the principle underlying the Universe. This can be done only through a purification of the mind ; and the mind can be purified through pure and controlled behaviour ; in conformity with moral norms like truth, non-violence and so on. The Jains or the Buddhists are also sects of a similar nature ; and they too do not accept the existence of God.

All these sects relegate the various rituals, forms of worship, pilgrimages, temples, or the order of Varnas or Ashramas to a subordinate position. But of all these, the monotheistic or the pantheistic devotional religion is really the developed form of religion. The essence of all religions is the surrender

to God. Monotheism or pantheism is the highest form of the development of human faith or devotion. With the philosophical forms or the doctrine of Brahma begins the critical examination and intellectual research of the foundation of faith. When these commence with a well developed logical rigidity, the foundations of religion begin to shake. The supernatural causes or interpretations disappear making room for logical reasoning.

Some of the modern scholars are seen often defending this eclecticism in Hinduism. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan is, for example, a leading case in point. He writes, "Hinduism is not based on any racial factor. It is an inheritance of thought and aspiration to which every race in India has made its distinctive contribution....Many features of modern Hinduism are derived from very primitive sources........While the Vedas represent the religion of the classes, the masses continued to worship their traditional deities, Yaksas and Nagas. Behind the facade of Vedic orthodoxy and its tendency to abstract symbolism, an extensive and deep-rooted system of popular beliefs and cults and a decided tendency to anthropomorphic presentation prevailed. The Vedic religion, however, absorbed, embodied and preserved the types and rituals of older cults. Instead of destroying them, it adapted them to its own requirements. It took so much from the social life of the Dravidians and other native inhabitants of India that it is very difficult to disentangle the original Aryan elements from others. The interpenetration has been complex, subtle and continuous with the result that there has grown up a distinct Hindu civilisation which is neither Aryan nor Dravidian nor Aboriginal. Ever since the dawn of reflection the dream of unity has hovered over the scene and haunted the imagination of the leaders........Though the religions of Islam and Christianity by their militant attitude occasionally provoked similar developments in Hinduism, its prevailing note continues to be one of understanding and acceptance of the *bona fides* of other faiths........As a result of this tolerant attitude, Hinduism itself has become a mosaic of almost all the types and stages of religious aspiration and endeavour."*

A number of scholars in the last century also advanced a similar defence. But this is fallacious. Preservation or acceptance of primitive notions is not a mark of tolerance and genero-

* Eastern Religion and Western Thought. pp. 306—13.

sity ; it is rather a sign of weakness. Since the primitive notions lead to a general decay and demoralisation, they come to be replaced by the more developed ones. It is therefore an illusion to go on believing that they too contain an element of truth. It becomes on the contrary, in the course of evolution, a duty to destroy them. It may be argued that the ignorant mass cannot assimilate the more developed notions ; but this is not true. All those backward social groups which were barred by Hinduism from inheriting the religion of the classes, were actually converted by the religions of Islam and Christianity and were made the basis of more developed religious institutions. That the destruction of primitive religious ideas or institutions and the creation of new and more developed ones in their place does prove at a certain stage of social development, conducive to progress, has been clearly demonstrated by both Islam and Christianity. When Buddhism, Islam or Christianity rushed forth to destroy the earlier primitive religions, they shattered a number of such illusions ; and cleared the human mind of them. Hinduism on the other hand, tried to preserve them. It was neither noble nor heroic, but it was weak and unable to do what it ought to have done.

Hinduism is not a religion ; it is rather a mosaic of various primitive and developed religious forms. It is wrong to argue that it has no dogma ; in fact it has a number of dogmas. If it is to be considered as tolerant because it does not demand faith in any particular prophet, dogma or sect, it will be equally legitimate to consider the entire humanity as tolerant, for it too allows various religions and does not demand faith in any one of them. There is not a single thing in Hindu life which is not controlled by dogma or custom. The authority of a dogma or prophet or custom or tradition is applicable to every one of them. There are numerous dogmas and numerous prophets, which have made Hinduism almost a museum. That Hindus worship the prophets of Islam or Christianity is not due to generosity or freedom of thought and opinion. It is rather a result of weakness, of imbecility. The tendency to surrender to any deity or prophet shows that weakness. When faith blinds vision, illusions throttle reason, emotions are entangled with delusive ideals of other worldly blessings, the mind naturally becomes weak and prone to surrender to anyone.

It is historically wrong to interpret this feature of Hinduism

as motivated by a desire to enable the various groups and sects to live amicably together. Hinduism did not preserve or assimilate them with that purpose. The different communities that came together in India had also their religious or social life and institutions. They intermingled with each other. It is not that the preservation of their religious or social thought and institutions led to their assimilation into the Hindu fold; but rather their coming together was responsible for intermingling of their thought and institutions. And this mixing up was not due to any humanitarian love but had its causes in migration, wars and search for the means of subsistence. Generosity is not its cause. The caste system or the system of Varnas are full of absence of this generosity. If it were really generous, the subjection of the Shudras, untouchability or the gradation of the caste system based on birth, which have been prevalent in it for centuries together, would never have become its important features; nor would the Smrties have propounded laws prescribing capital punishment to Shudras, transgressing the laws of the Vedic religion. The numerous primitive forms could survive in Hinduism, because an adequate organised force was never created in support of its more developed ones. There did not arise many prophets in it, moved by the inspiration of nobler ideas, and determined to show humanity, at various stages of development, the path of well-being, thus freeing it from the grip of primitive notions and illusions; and those who did arise could not succeed because of the peculiar social environment. Islam wielded together hundreds of nomadic tribes of the Turks, Arabs and the central Asian people, fighting for centuries together amongst themselves, into a forceful and vigorous society. If the earlier history of these tribes is closely seen, it will be clear that they were in no way superior to the lower strata of the Hindu society. The same can be said about Buddhism or Christianity. To allow various low and primitive illusions to remain under the garb of tolerance is a sign of intelectual and mental degeneration.

The monotheistic, pantheistic or philosophic religions contain broad principles conducive to a decent existence and leading the primitive communities onwards along the path of progress. When those principles themselves come to occupy a predominant position, the religious institutions founded on them start spreading. The primitive religious forms disappear, and scope is provided to

the development of art as well as the various natural and social sciences based on reason. These higher forms of religion cannot develop and expand unless they have relegated the particular primitive rites, the peculiar narrow social customs and rituals to a definite subordinate position. The ability to transgress the limits of a particular community, race or nation and to take up a universal form can arise only out of such subordination. Where on the other hand, rites, rituals and customs dominate, religion can never become effective and powerful, no matter how broad the principles, on which it is based, are. The traditions or customs of any particular community cannot be adopted by other communities to any significant extent. It is only religions which provide an important place to broad principles or which accept simply one particular prophet and dogma, that have the capacity of quickly spreading out.

Hinduism does not belong to any of these categories. The rituals of different communities, religious forms in family, caste or regions as well as various mutually inconsistent traditions and customs acquired permanence in it. Numerous tiny communities, their customs, traditions and rites acquired sanctity, purity and respectability. Political or social forces, making a clean sweep of the narrow limitations and restrictions as impediments in the way of progress and organising the social life on broad premises with a powerful authority at the centre, did not hold their sway for a long time in India, They waned, before fully developing, with the result that the narrow restrictive laws of the Shruties and Smrties themselves continued to dominate till the end. Broad religious principles remained in suspense and had never the power to destroy the old primitive religious forms or build up a new social organisation.

The task of keeping this mosaic of Hinduism alive was performed by the priestly class. The realistic thought pertaining to things of this world could not therefore develop nor could a social organisation sustaining it. The priestly class, sustained by the primitive religion, is itself alone responsible for this confusion, caste system and social backwardness. A class maintaining itself on the basis of faith in the stars, the dead, the ghosts and various other similar illusions, sought to preserve and foster that faith out of simple selfish considerations. It could perpetuate its domination over the community only in

that peculiar manner. The religion of the Puranas can bear clear testimony to that.

New thought tends to become effective in societies where other productive classes succeed in overthrowing the domination of the priestly class. With the relegation of the priests to the background, arise science and philosophy. The universal religion of Christianity dominated Europe owing to the stability of the Roman Empire for a long time. The rise of the trading and the warrior classes in Arabia led to the rise of Islam. It was classes other than the Brahmins that established in India Universal religions like Buddhism. Modern western civilization also arose after the decline of the power of the priests. It is only when human society emerged out of its primitive barbaric stage, this class played a progressive role ; but thereafter it has been a continual impediment in the way of progress. The history of India clearly shows this fact and the confused form of Hinduism is also a result of this.

HINDU PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Let us now turn to the statement of the philosophy of history that we find in Hinduism ; its view of social events, their dynamics, growth and decay. The divine as well as the material or human interpretations are both found in it. The doctrine of reincarnation as well as that of the Yugas belong to the former category. That God takes birth as a human being from time to time and saves man from various calamities is the statement found in the Mahabharata, Gita and the Puranas, which is a statement of the theory of reincarnation. Various Puranas point out that human or social life degenerates when Rakshasas or Asuras are born in society, while it progresses and prospers with the birth of the Gods. There is also the theory of the cyclical movement of the four Yugas. Life decays in the Kali Yuga while it prospers in the Krita Yuga. Thus its decay or prosperity is a result of the times. There is a tone of inevitability about these movements. All this implies that prosperity or decline is an outcome of the divine, supernatural beings or forces and that man entirely depends upon these and is helpless. He is a poor victim of fate or the Gods.

The worldly or material interpretation of history on the other hand, has been narrated by Bhishma in the Shanti Parva of

the Mahabharata. With a good king comes in prosperity while degeneration is a result of a wicked person coming to the throne. Social prosperity or decline is thus a result of the institution of kingship. The king can make a particular Yuga Krita or Kali. He is the cause of the times.

There is another theory also to be found in the Mahabharata. It says that the people themselves are the cause of social prosperity or social decline. It is they who make and unmake the king. They used to manage their own affairs on the basis of norms decided by them among themselves in a peaceful and harmonious manner. In course of time anarchy prevailed and the law of the jungle came to dominate. Hence they made Manu their king. It will thus be seen that even in the early times, Indian thought had advanced to the stage of furnishing a secular explanation of historical development in place of one in terms of the supernatural or divine causes. Social life unfortunately was not developed to an adequate extent so that this bold thought may thrive with the result that it was defeated in the end. There is another interpretation also to be found in the Shruties and the Smrties. It says that the conditions of social existence are dependent upon the priests and the king. If they are conscious and dutiful, society prospers or else it declines.

The various other religions such as Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity or Islam simply furnish the divine interpretation. According to Zoroastrianism for example, the domination of falsehood means the beginning of the dark ages in human history. Those dark ages still continue and will in course of time gradually disappear when the dawn of enlightenment and truth will appear. The kingdom of God will then be established on the earth. Christianity or Islam consider Satan as the source of evil, and responsible for decline and decay. A concept similar to that of the above one in Zoroastrianism is also found in them. From time to time come the holy prophets of God in order to show man the path of the right. Jesus, according to Christianity, and Mohammad, according to Islam, was the last and the greatest of such prophets. All the religions subscribe to the view that the Satanic forces make life vicious while on the other hand, the divine forces are responsible for the establishment of a happy and prosperous kingdom of God.

With the rise of the various systems of philosophy in Hin-

duism there came up along with the idea of social prosperity or decline, that of individual salvation or Moksha also.

HINDUISM—AN HISTORICAL VIEW

Hinduism has come to its present form through a long process which is marked by various stages. Some of them can clearly be defined such as tribal religion ; the pre-Vedic polytheistic religion ; the religion of the Shruties and the Smrties professed by the Vedic Aryans ; the various universal religions like Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Jainism, Buddhism and the Hinduism of the Shruties, Smrties and the Puranas.

The existence of a number of tribal religions was a mark of humanity in its most primitive stages. Religion exists in this form in the nomadic stage of existence before the rise of a stable social order based upon elementary division of labour and marked by the beginnings of agriculture and other arts. The Sun, the Moon, the fire, the cobra etc. were all early tribal Gods. The festival of 'Naga Panchami' is a relic of the customs of the tribe of Nagas which existed in earlier times in India. The Ramayana indicates the existence of the tribe of Vanaras with Hanumana as their tribal God. Some of the Vedic scholars contend that the different Aryan tribes had their different tribal Gods. Every tribe had its own God and often they both had the same name. When a variety of social factors brought these tribes together, there took place a mixing up of their customs and their objects and modes of worship, many of which are still seen in Hinduism. Tribal magic is one such primitive form of religion. The primitive tribes similarly used to celebrate some common festival on which occasion all the members of the tribe would assemble together for the celebration in order that the tribe may thrive or there may be general prosperity. Some religious rites as well as communal dances used to be important constituents of these festivals. The festival of holi is a significant ritual of tribal magic. There are also village gods and regional gods, which were earlier merely tribal gods. The Goddesses of Manasa and Kali are worshipped in Bengal ; that of Shitala in U.P. ; the Gods of Goriya and Dilligoriya in Behar, Kartikaswami in Tamilnad or Biroba and Khandoba in Maharashtra. These regional and similar other village Gods also arose from the primitive tribal Gods.

The worship of various trees and animals is also a form of primitive religion. Some sociologists argue that this might have been the religion of the earliest inhabitants of India namely the Negritos. It may also be a possible Vedic tradition. In the Atharvaveda, for example, herbs are worshipped as Gods. In the Yajurveda, certain trees, used on the occasion of the Yajnas, are considered sacred and are worshipped. These may be therefore the relics of the very ancient primitive life of the Vedic Aryans. Umbara, Pimpala, Banyan are all sacrificial trees while the cow or the bull are sacrificial animals. In many other religions also, is found this custom of attributing sacredness or sanctity to the sacrificial animals. The custom of offering human sacrifice is found in the earlier stages in almost all the communities of the world. The British Law in India has prohibited human sacrifice ; but the custom is still found, though very rarely, in certain parts of the country. Human sacrifice is also prescribed in the Vedas. The custom might then have disappeared ; but there is evidence to show that it must have existed among the Vedic Aryans at some stage of their development. That the soul in the human body should be sacrificed for attaining general prosperity was a widely prevalent belief, which must have been responsible for this custom though it has fallen into disuse for a long time in Hinduism.

The pre-Vedic religion in India has a striking similarity with the religion of the ancient communities in Egypt, Persia and so on. The oldest Indian culture bears this resemblance with the culture in the Mediterranean regions or in central and western Asia ; and according to Dr. Guha and Keith, the unearthed relics of the ancient Indian civilisation at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa indicate a racial similarity between the earlier Indian inhabitants and the inhabitants of these regions. The pre-Vedic religions existed five thousand years ago along the banks of the river Indus. The human race that established this civilisation is known as the Mediterranean or the Armenoid race. The historians, owing to this similarity, can now disclose one of the earliest and unknown chapters of Indian history. In the earlier civilisations of Egypt, Crete and Mesopotamia are also found the Gods of Shiva, Vishnu, the Goddess of Kali and the worship of the Naga (cobra), Linga (genital organs), the moon, the Graha (the planets), and the ancestors. The terms Linga and puja are not to be found in the Vedas at all ; they are non-Vedic

terms. The worship of the Linga, the nine Grahas or the Goddesses is nowhere mentioned in the main Vedic literature. The custom of Devadasis (religious prostitutes), idol worship, astrology, seven days, the art of writing, the hereditary priests in temples etc., are all features of the Mediterranean civilisation. Hinduism thus inherits a number of things peculiar to the civilisations which arose along the banks of the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphratis and the Indus. This indeed is the pre-Vedic Indian civilisation ; and the religion of it is an important constituent of Hinduism. It is on this foundation that the religion of the Hindus has grown for centuries together.

The Shrouta-Smarta religion is the religion of the Aryans. They came and conquered the pre-Vedic inhabitants of India ; but could not establish their domination all over the country. Their domination began with the western and north-western India and gradually spread directly or indirectly all over in two ways—through direct conquest by the kings or indirect spread of the influence of priests. They were originally nomadic, hunting tribes, with ambitions to conquer and used to rear up herds of cattle. It is believed that they might have conquered the earlier inhabitants through the use of the horse in warfare. Being nomadic, they had a number of qualities useful for warring tribes and could become therefore easily victorious over the stable agricultural communities. The sacrifice of cow, goat, or horse was a feature of their religious institutions. The priests in their Yajnas used to be offered cows, horses, goats and such other animals or precious metals like gold and silver, which simply goes to show that they were mainly cattle-rearing tribes. It is only in the later stages that we find the offer of land. There is no mention of it in the Rigveda; most of which was written considerably after their conquests. The main feature of their religion in those days also was the worship of natural elements or forces, believed consciously to be possessed of power. This worship is the Yajna. The main object of that worship or the Yajna was to attain with the help of these forces the requisites of a proper material existence. Magic also had a place in their religion ; and is mainly stated in the Atharvaveda. The earlier form of Yajna was also magical as it appears from the Kamyeshti Yajna.

The Sun was worshipped under various names by the Vedic

people. Similarly there are other Gods like Varuna, the Earth, Vishwakarman, Aditi, Ashwi, Indra, Marut, Rudra and so on, mentioned in the Vedas. The composers of the hymns in Rigveda often mention each one of them as an omniscient and an omnipotent being. The original differentiation in their powers thus appears to vanish in the times of the Rigveda; and each one of them is elevated to the position of God. Though the Yajurveda in its present form dates after the samhitas or hymns of Rigveda, its description of the rituals of Yajna can be said to be older, since it mentions separate identity of these deities. These deities are also mentioned in the Atharvaveda, though there, they seem to have been used for magical purposes. The magic in Atharvaveda also belongs to the Vedic Aryans. Several Rishis from Rigveda, Vashistha for instance, knew magic. Bhrigu, Angiras and Atharvan were also conversant with it. Ayurveda or the medicine of those days was also magic. The quality of being a deity has been attributed to the natural objects or elements. When man, for example, was incapable of understanding the material nature of objects like the sun or the fire, it was quite natural for him to imagine these to be possessed of supernatural powers. Mitra and Varuna are the day and the night thus imagined to be Gods. Savitri is the autumnal sun, for in autumn the seeds germinate and begin to grow. Pushan is the sun that feeds and strengthens the crops and the herbs. It is difficult to state exactly the nature of Indra and Bhaga, though it is quite possible to imagine it. Indra is a warrior, who attacks the enemy, is fond of Somarasa and who can easily devour a whole roasted bull or some other animal. He is the lord of the thundering skies. Marut *i.e.* the killer is his helpmate. The spirit, energy and zeal of the Aryan, hunting the wild animals, and defending his cattle from them and getting fully intoxicated and violent with a good drink of Somarasa, is thus Indra. Sometimes this Indra used to haunt the seers and the sages. There are hymns composed by Indra, found in the Rigveda. When the Rishi began to compose the hymn, he and the people around him imagined that Indra had haunted him and was composing it. Rudra is a deity of storms, while Aditi of the endless or infinite skies.

It may not be possible to indicate the material basis of all the deities in the above manner ; but it is no longer a matter of controversy among the scholars that many of them have

such a basis; and that they were prayed and worshipped in order to obtain the requisites of material existence. Thus religion and its ancillary notions arose in the beginning to satisfy the material needs of mankind. Many of these, for instance, are dependent for their satisfaction upon the sun and the fire, which were continually worshipped by the Vedic householder, the worship being known as Agnihotra. It was the main mode of worship of the Aryans who were preoccupied with the rearing of cattle and who regarded agriculture as subordinate to it. Another important ritual was the *Darshapurnamaseshti*, which had the preservation of the cow as its important feature. The attainment of salvation as its result has been mentioned only in the later Vedic literature or the Brahmanas. In the Vedic mantras and prayers, it is only the material needs that are continually talked about. There is a continual demand for grains, animals, wealth, physical strength, woman, slave, a brave son, destruction of the enemy, averting of disease and similar other material needs. The heavens appear much later in the Vedic literature, in the Brahmanas. There is reference to the other-wordly life in the Vedic rituals but there is nowhere a comprehensive or elaborate statement of it. Many of the otherworldly ideas are similarly found in the Vedas but their elaboration or discussion is found only in the later Vedic literature and the Upanishads.

The various rites as well as the doctrine of the Ashramas or stages of life are found in the Vedas. But in the period of the Rigveda it is only two stages of life, the student and the householder, that seem to be recognised. It is only in the Upanishads that we have a mention of the four stages. That there is even a statement in the Vedas that they accept only one stage that of the house-holder; and that the other stages are rejected by them is the opinion of one stage mentioned in the Gautama Dharma Sutras. There are one or two statements in the Rigveda which indicate that the first Ashrama, namely the Brahmacharin, was mainly meant for the attainment of knowledge. An elaborate statement regarding this stage is found in the Brahmanas as well as in the Atharvaveda; while all the four stages have been mentioned in the *Chandogyopanishad*.

The Vedic Aryans seem to have taken the other two stages *viz.* the hermit retiring to the jungle and the Sanyasin from the

culture of the non-Vedic people ; but it took a long time for them to assimilate these forms. Long before the Vedic Aryans were civilised, the non-Vedic people had developed civilisation to a very high degree in Egypt, Iraq and India ; and it is these non-vedic civilisations that left their imprint upon the Vedic civilisation which borrowed a number of social customs and traditions as well as a vast store of knowledge from them. But this was done under social conditions in which there arose the need for Sanyasa or renunciation.

The concept of the sixteen rites is found only in the later Smrti literature. The Gautama Dharma Sutra, which is an earlier work than all the Smrties, includes even the Yajna as a rite ; and has mentioned forty types of them. The sixteen rites are mainly connected with the Atharvaveda. In the Kaushik and Grihya Sutras of the Atharvaveda these are elaborately mentioned but there is no mention of sixteen types or any other classification in the older Grihya Sutras. Besides these sixteen types of rites, there are also mentioned Sula-gava, indicative of a primitive life. The caste rites, the naming (Namakarana) thread ceremony, (Upanayana), marital rites (Vivaha), Antyeshti (the mortuary rites) are all found from the Anthropological studies and traveller's accounts, to be still existent among the primitive communities in Africa, Australia, America and the Pacific islands.

The beginnings of the doctrine of the Varnas is to be found in the Rigveda. The mention of the four Varnas in the tenth mandala of the Rigveda belongs to the later Rigveda period. The mention of Brahma and Kshatra is of a much earlier period and is found together. The terms "Arya Varna" (the masters) and the "Dasa Varna" (the slaves) also occur at one place. Dasa Varna means the lower Varna or the Sudras. If the entire Vedic literature is seen carefully, it will be found that the Vedic Aryans had created a new class of the conquered slaves ; and the conquering Aryans were their masters. The dominating classes of the Aryans were the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas ; and the entire power in society was concentrated in the hands of the former two. The social laws and restrictions were laid down in order to make the Sudras toil under the domination of Aryans. The right to perform the Vedic Yajna was kept by them to themselves. There is no historical basis for the view that

because the non-Vedics were more backward or primitive, they were put in a subordinate or inferior position. The non-vedic people were proficient in agriculture and various other arts. They had their huge kingdoms in existence in India ; some of which were conquered by the Vedic Aryans. The people under these kingdoms came under the Aryan domination and the institution of Varnas was created ; and thus an attempt was made to monopolise the wealth, power, honour and purity in society. The vast bulk of the community (nearly 75%) on the other hand, proficient in agriculture and other arts, was reduced to the position of slaves.

The institutions of religion were thus used by the Vedics to bring the non-Vedic masses under their domination ; and the Vedic Yajna served them well in this connection. They fostered, for example, the idea that wealth has been created by Prajapati for Yajna ; and thus made it religious to deprive the Sudra of his wealth. Even milk obtained from the Sudra's milking the cow was considered impure for the purposes of the Yajna. Any Vedic Aryan possessed the right to punish the Sudra in anyway he liked or drive him out of the community.

The Sudra was assigned a three-fold duty ; agriculture, craft and service of the higher Varnas. Agriculture or craft are in a sense important professions. But the Sudras had to undergo a hard life, full of sufferings, for they were deprived of most of the fruits of their toil. With the help of tyranical laws, the Vedic Aryans appropriated a large bulk of their produce. There were incomparably higher rates of interest and rent for the Sudras than for others. The burden of these was reduced by law so far as the higher three Varnas were concerned ; while it was the heaviest on the productive class of Sudras, who produced most of the wealth of the community and thus constituted the foundation of its social existence. Rate of interest or rent as high as 60% was allowed legally under the laws of the Smrties, to be recovered from them.

The followers of the Shrouta-Smarta religion utilised the sanctity of the Vedas for strengthening the bonds of social slavery of the non-Vedics. They refused the right to order their conduct in conformity with the Vedic injunctions, to the rest of the community. There is a rite named Vratyastoma, mentioned in the Tandya Brahmana of the Sama Veda as well as

in the Katyayana Shroutasutra, the object of which seems to be the conversion of the non-vedic into the Vedic; but it appears to have been very rarely performed. In the old Sutras and Smrties, a Sudra trying to study the Vedas has been condemned to capital punishment. It was thus only the Aryan, purified by the performance of the Vedic Yajna and observance of the smrti religion, who was the real master of society. His birth gave him the right to follow the vedic religion and his right brought him his superiority and mastery. The Brahmin got this superior position by virtue of his priestly function. There are some who have argued that by Brahmin was implied a self-less, self-controlled, learned, and hermit-like being. But this figurative meaning is not correct according to the Shrouta-Smarta law. That law prescribes a very mild punishment to a Brahmin even guilty of adultery with a woman of the other Varnas; and he is also allowed to marry her. Even important Shruties and Smrties permit him to have concubines from among the women of the Sudras. On the other hand, a Sudra marrying or commiting adultery with a Brahmin woman or of any other higher Varna is to be awarded a deliberately painful capital punishment. There is no offence for which the Brahmin can get the death sentence. In fact there ought to have been a severe punishment prescribed for a Brahmin deviating from the path of selflessness, control or penance. But the law of the Shruties and the Smrties, says exactly the opposite. The Brahmin and the other Aryans, according to that law, enjoy a large number of rights and privileges as compared with the Sudras. The facilities provided by this law to the Brahmins in connection with the enjoyment of wealth, power and honour are indeed almost unparelleled anywhere. The various virtues often associated with the Brahmin are in fact not very important in the eyes of the law of the Smrties. The only learning that it valued was the learning of the Vedas and the tasks of priesthood. The Brahmins generally were the only dispensers of justice, and failing a Brahmin, the Kshatriya or the Vaishya would do it. But the Smrties very categorically assert that no matter how learned, the Sudra can never dispense justice. Rates of interest and rent were to be the lowest for the Brahmin according to the Smrties. In dispensing justice, the Brahmin was to be dealt with first. The Brahmin and the other higher Varnas were allowed to pursue the occupations of the Sudras, but the Sudras were prohibited from taking up those of the other higher Varnas; even

when in serious difficulties. It was considered to be a serious offence.

It may be felt that the above discussion is a digression since we have referred more to the Smrties and less to the Vedas. It is well known that the laws of the Dharma Sutra and the Smrties were those of the Vedic Aryans. The social law of the Smrties is founded upon the gradation of the various Varnas. This law is found in the Vedas themselves actually to a very little extent. The general and particular principles underlying this law are only found there. The rituals of the Yajna and the knowledge of the Brahman are alone found in the Vedas and the Upanishads. On the other hand, the Sutras and the Smrties provide a collection of the laws which were gradually coming to prevail in the Vedic times. The meaning of the term "Smrti" is itself a compilation from memory of the customs, laws and traditions prevalent among the Vedic Aryans. The Vedas on the other hand are a presentation together of the rituals, the hymns sung to the Gods and the knowledge of the Brahman possessed by the Vedic Aryans. The compilation of the Smrties was done in the period after the Vedas were composed. If they had been compiled when the Mantras or the Brahmanas were written, they too would have been styled as the Vedas. It is essentially because of this old tradition of the religion in the smrties that the authors of the Sutras as well as Manu could assert that the religion from the Smrties is also vedic or has originated from the Vedas. It is true that in the post-Vedic period there was considerable addition or change made in the religious code of the Smrties. But barring some of the Smrties like Parashara, the main framework of the religious code in the Smrties and the Sutras is mostly one and the same. The form of the Varna institution or the social system founded on it, as described in the Smrties of Gautama, Apastamba, Vasistha, Shankhalikhita, Manu, Yajnavalkya, Narada, Brhaspati and so on, is almost alike ; and it is this that has been described above.

The Vedic religion is not the religion of all. It is simply the religion of a group of people ; and was kept by them aloof from the rest of the society ; and utilised for establishing their domination over the vast masses of the people.

The domination of the Brahmin and the subjection of the Sudra are the outstanding features of the social system of the

Vedic Aryans. Even in the Vedic times, there arose a reaction among the Kshatriyas against this domination of the Brahmins ; and it took two forms. Some of the kings began to claim the privileges of the Brahmins. This was the point in the dispute of Vishwamitra and Vasistha ; and the story of Vishwamitra shows that the kings could get those privileges at least to some extent. The Puranas also mention that a number of royal families attained the position of the Brahmins. The other form of the reaction was the dispute regarding the extra rights and privileges enjoyed by the Brahmins. A number of kings fought against this Brahmanic superiority. The king Vena was against the Yajna and the offerings made to the priests on that occasion. Haihaya and Vaitahavya fought against the freedom enjoyed by the Brahmins from all taxes as is clear from the fact that they tried to forcibly take away the cows of the Brahmins. Animals were used in those days as means of exchange instead of money. Parashuram again tried to establish the Brahmanic privilege by defeating and destroying the Kshatriyas. The wars of the Mahabharata settled the issue in dispute. The Kshatriyas were almost destroyed. The internecine conflict in Mahabharata achieved what Parashurama had failed to achieve. The domination of the Brahmins was once again established and the Kshatriyas had to take up the subordinate position.

It was only after this that the Brahmins developed the various branches of learning. The doctrine of salvation arose. The Upanishads proved the futility of the Vedic Yajna and the deities. Out of their subtle criticism arose the doctrine of Brahma and spiritual worship. The general rituals of worship of numerous deities began to weaken and to decline. The social atmosphere, unsuitable to the Yajna and the religious institutions founded on it, helped the process. The roots of this weakness lay in the social system of the Vedas itself. The prevalence of non-Vedic customs and rituals among the non-Aryans who were now coming into contact with the Aryans, also had its influence. The stable social order established along the Vedic lines began to show signs of senility. Thinking sections of the community began to subject the Vedic traditions to a searching and critical analysis. Old ideas, old deities began to melt away making room for a new thought. The various religious notions like Brahman, renunciation, detachment, monotheism and pantheism are born during this period.

In the days of the Upanishads, the meditative thought which attached great significance to renunciation detachment or hermit-like resort to the forest came into prominance because it was becoming increasingly difficult to perform the Yajna or the duties of the householder under the existing social conditions. In the process of social disintegration, many a household was disturbed and ruined. It began to be believed that the religion of the Sanyasin was superior and the Ashramas of the hermit and the Sanyasin came to be regarded as more important than those of the student (Brahmachari) and the householder.

The religions of Shaivism, Vaishanavism, Jainism and Buddhism were the creation of the non-Vedic classes; and the royal families not connected with priests took the lead in the matter. When the Vedic institution of Yajna with its domination of the Brahmins began to decline owing to the operation of various internal and external factors, these religions began to prosper. That was nearly twenty five centuries ago. Their superiority over the Vedic religion consisted in the fact that they showed the way of well-being to all. Universal religions, proclaiming that man, irrespective of his birth or environments, can attain the highest position possible, arose in India earlier than in any other country of the world; and they led the revolt against the social system established by the Aryans. According to the Vedic religion, it was only the three Varnas that were regarded as pure in the eyes of religion, and with the help of this religious holiness of things, they made the Sudras toil for them and appropriated to themselves all the enjoyments of this world and the claims to religious superiority. This sanctity of a few and degradation of many, both determined by birth, came to be destroyed under the impact of the new Universal religions.

Vaishnavism and Shaivism have a tradition from the pre-Vedic times. They prevailed in numerous civilised groups other than the Vedics. In the western and north western parts of India, the followers of these religions began to preach monotheism. Devotion to Vasudeva was prevalent in the times of the Vedas and has been styled as Narayaneeya religion in the Mahabharata. Devotion to Shiva was also prevalent from Kashmir to Bengal and from the Himalayas to Rameshwar.

A number of leading thinkers arose in these religions who condemned the institution of Yajna, sacrifice of animals, and the importance of the Brahmins. They were mainly responsible for the spread of the idea that God is one ; and that all can reach Him through devotion; that all other religious rituals have no significance as compared to devotion ; that devotion and moral behaviour can lead the individual to salvation ; and that this can be attained by any one, be he a Brahmin, a Kshatriya, a Vaishya or a Sudra.

Originally these sects were opposed to the Vedas, but their acceptance by the Vedic Brahmins dissolved this opposition. In the post-Buddhistic Hindu Society, they occupy a very important position. Bhagavad Gita appeared when Vaishnavism became merged into the Vedic religion. The religions of the Puranas were also brought into being by those who accepted the monotheism of these sects. The low non-Vedic notions were attached with great importance by the Puranas. Astrology, worship of the stars and the planets, rituals and pilgrimages and various other similar things were picked up from these religions by the Brahmins who used them to maintain themselves and to foster ignorance and fatalism in society.

In the Eastern regions of Northern India, there arose the other two important religions of the world, Jainism and Buddhism, among the non-Vedic civilised communities. These are also Universal religions ; because in them also the central thought was that anyone with the help of pure and moral behaviour can attain spiritual well-being. These were however more sceptical religions and attacked vehemently the Vedas, God and the Yajna ; Shramanas belonging to the ruling Kshatriya class, created these religions. In order to attack the social system based on Brahmanic supremacy, and change it, they attacked its three-fold roots.

From the religious literature of the Jains and the Buddhists as well as of the Brahmanas, it appears that the main heresies were spread by the Shramanas and the monks. Charvaka was a profound critical intellect ; but the Mahabharata also regards him as a monk. The culture of the Shramanas arose in the beginning among the non-Vedics ; for their society was still more ancient. They therefore began to feel much earlier the evil results of the social system of the dominating Vedics. The

Mahabharata mentions Takshaka, a king from the Naga tribe, as a nude Shramana. The story of the Sarpasatra from the Adiparva of the Mahabharata clearly shows that the Vedic Aryans were the enemies of the Nagas. On the other hand, the tales from the religious literature of the Jains indicate that the Nagas were the friends of the Jain Tirthankaras (religious apostles) and had defended them against dangers on many occasions. Buddha similarly was born in a tribal society. It was among the non-Vedics that sects like Jatila, Mundi, Tapasa, Parivrajaka, Ajeevaka etc. arose in the beginning. Later on they found a place in the Vedic Aryans also.

The various non-Vedic communities lifted up their head when the need for a new order became patent as a result of the decline of the Vedic social system. They felt the necessity of breaking the dependence of society on the priests; combatting the domination of rites and rituals that had arisen out of the selfish and pleasure-seeking attitude of the priests. Thinkers like Charvaka, for example, very vehemently attacked these rituals and their upholders, the parasitic priests.

The Brahmins used to kill various useful animals like the cows etc. for the sake of the Yajna and their feasts. The kings were continually engaged in fratricidal wars, which prevented the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, commerce and such other things from developing. The need arose thus of some overriding sovereign power. The social parasites drawing their living from the toil of the productive classes had considerably increased. The Sudras were mainly these classes but since they belonged to the lowest wrung of the social ladder, the political authority never cared to defend their interests. Both production and distribution of wealth were thus disorganised and the entire society faced the prospect of disintegration with its concomitant evils. It was this social environment that bred religion which emphasised renunciation, control and contentment, and which taught to look at everything in this world as an illusion. The knowledge and understanding of the social order on the other hand had not developed upto a point at which the idea of remodelling the entire social structure with a view to making it conducive to harmony and progress, could arise. There was therefore no alternative to the rise of the spiritualistic outlook which regarded destruction or conquest of desire as eternal truth

and a noble idea. The social system of the Vedics had no capacity to establish harmony or order. There was no doubt the thought of material well-being in the Vedic tradition but it was not adequate to solve the great social problem. There was no scope for material development and progress beyond a limited extent in the social order of the Vedas. It is not enough to have material ideals; they must be capable of guiding social change in order to be attained and to be conducive to social development. But the Shrouta-Smarta social order had exhausted its possibilities from that point of view; and had become a fetter on social progress. The soul, cramped and crumbled under its strong and rigid restrictions, cried out that life is all misery, and nothing else but misery. Kapila, Buddha, and the Jain apostles all proclaimed with one voice that it was misery.

Every philosophy of life is a product of peculiar social conditions. This pessimistic philosophy, characterising life as all misery, was thus a product of the existing social order, twenty-five centuries ago. It was the cry of humanity seeking and struggling to emerge out of those conditions. Religion, philosophy or literature are not merely the expressions of individual thoughts or feelings. They also inform us regarding the social forces and struggles. Buddha was the greatest leader of this new religious upheaval; and he had among his disciples persons from all classes and strata of society. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Kings, Merchants, Sudras and women all had joined the ranks of his followers. It was his rule that people should be taught and advised in the language of their everyday use; and he used the Prakrita language of the two kingdoms—Magadha and Kosala, for his purposes; while commentaries on his message were written in the Pali, Paishachi and Apabhransha languages.

Truth, non-violence, plain living, limited food, conquest of desire and the transitoriness of life were the main planks of his advice. It was his opinion that one should better not go into the root cause of the Universe or God. He did not support any onesided view; nor was his whole emphasis on renunciation. He used to claim that his was the golden mean; but there was the belief that the condition of the monk is higher and nobler than the rest, and that through purification of the mind and conquest or destruction of desire, one can attain Nirvana or the highest bliss. The post-Buddhistic Hinduism has completely

accepted that life is transitory and that destruction of desire can lead to salvation. The Gita, for example, clearly states that this life is full of misery and transitory and that the stage of Sthitaprajna means the end of all desire. This doctrine originated in the Upanishads, was strengthened by Buddhism, and at last was accepted in its entirety, by Hinduism. The non-violence preached by Buddha was opposed to the violence committed at the time of the Yajna. He did not, however, preach the renunciation of kingship.

Movements based upon human reason and rational thinking were developing in India when Buddhism arose. It was an age of social transition. The religious laws were yielding place to those of polity. Thinkers were arising, who subjected the concepts of God, the Vedas, Yajna, society, the world, morality, religion and its authority all to a fundamental criticism. The criticism of the Vedas, God and Yajna began in the Upanishads themselves. God no longer remained an individual in the Upanishads; he became a broad, Universal principle. Thinkers like Buddha and others came to the conclusion that He was not a proper subject for criticism nor could He be proved with reason. Kapila and others, on the other hand, proved his non-existence. Vaishnavas proved the futility of Yajna for religious purposes. The monotheists and the atheists both raised morality to the status of religion. Some writers on polity regarded the otherworldly concepts as merely symbolic and tried to establish that the utility of religious institutions was simply in this world. Even the supposed eternal notions like truth, non-violence etc. were proved inadequate in the Santi Parva of the Mahabharata. It was proved logically and in the light of experience that on exceptional occasions even untruth or violence become inevitable. Thus loftiest heights were scaled by the intellectual thought in India from the time of Upanishads to the rise of the systems of philosophy.

Prof. Max Muller has characterised this period as "The age of Indian Renaissance"; and has argued that it was due to the contact with Greece which was established owing to the invasion of Alexander the Great. But the history of this Renaissance for a century and a half previous to this invasion is available today; and Buddha was the brightest star of this period of great intellectual convulsions. He arose about a century earlier than

the invasion ; a number of outstanding thinkers like Charvaka, Brhaspati, Ushana, Kapila, Kanada and so on preceded him.

Against the background of this great intellectual movement, arose the empire of the Mouryas, the biggest ancient empire of the Hindus known to history. It arose in the post-Buddhistic period ; but did not last for a long time like the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire, owing to its spread over most of the known parts of Europe, laid the foundations of Christianity ; it destroyed most of the earlier paganistic forms of primitive religions. The Mourya empire, on the other hand, soon came to an end, as a result of the Brahmin minister, Pushyamitra, capturing the throne. This opened again the way for a revival of the Brahmanical religion and thus ruled out the possibility of any universal religion again exercising its sway in India. The Brahmins, of course, could no longer establish the old Vedic religion but resorted to some sort of an eclectic combination of the old and the new. Various sects, with their primitive or developed rites, rituals and forms of worship were pooled together for the purpose. Shaivism and Vaishnavism were also absorbed and were given a form suitable to priests.

The decline of the power of the atheists, materialists, and rationalists led to a weakening of the heresy ; and the Brahmins again revived the old Hinduism. The material or social law was coming to be accepted in the social and political affairs of the community but the Brahmins checked the process and once again established the law of the Smrties. The secular laws of social polity were not permitted to remain. While the western legal systems still take the Roman Law as their source and the Romans are being credited with having given humanity a legal code, in India, a similar development was nipped in the bud by this rise of Brahmanism.

With their taking up a sectarian form, the intellectual movements of the Jains and the Buddhists began to be blunted. There was again a relapse into primitive barbarism and the number of idle, parasitic vagabondish monks and sanyasins began to increase. The status of the Brahmins was more stable in society than that of these. The Brahmins were related to the day-to-day existence and life of the people. Being householders, they had a hand in the daily life and behaviour of others. It was therefore easy for the Brahmins to combat and defeat these monks. The Brahmins

created the new religion, in a palatable and attractive form to the people, incorporating in it numerous deities, modes of worship, rites, rituals, conceptions and anecdotes acceptable to all sorts of people. Mixing up the vedics mantras and notions with it, they created the code of rituals for the higher Varnas. The old idol worship, deities and their prayers were thus given a new form. The old Varna system was transformed into the new caste system ; and with its help was consolidated the social position of the Brahmins. The monotheistic sects were also absorbed in the polytheistic and pantheistic religions. With the use of the doctrine of Brahma, all the deities were raised up to a level of dignity. In fact the doctrine of Brahma from the Upanishads would have eliminated the crowd of deities ; but the Brahmasutras of Badarayana saved them all ; not only that, they also saved the non-vedic deities. Various primitive, pagan and tribal Gods were thus revived. The worship of the Lingam was associated with the Rudradhyaya from the Vedas, and the Brahmins ousted the Sudras from most of the temples of Lingam from the position of the priests. They also established their domination in the temples and the places of pilgrimage of non-vedic origin. The priests at these places in the beginning were the non-vedic non-Brahmins. But now that the higher Varnas accepted them, the Brahmins naturally became the priests. Thus the efforts of the Brahmins to enter everywhere, barring exceptional sects strongly and fundamentally opposed to the Vedas, precluded the rise of an orderly uniform and well-organised religion, The various sects were given varying degrees of authority. The result was the rise of a feeble eclectic Hinduism. What is not told in the Shruties was stated by the Brahmins on the authority of the Shruties. The religion accepted by the Hindus today arose in this manner, the norms of which have been stated in the Smrties and elaborated in the Puranas.

Everything pertaining to the religion based on the caste system is found in the Smrties. The taboos of food, drink and contact or touch are all found in them. Similarly the marital rituals as well as the relations of different castes with each other are also elaborately described. Thus the traditional Hinduism is to be found in the Smrties and the Puranas. The Vedas mention a very negligible part of it. In the Upanishads, there is the doctrine of Brahma, in the Sankhya philosophy, the ideas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas and in the Yogasutras of

Patanjali, there are the notions of the Yogic vision, an insight into the past, present and the future, and various other miracles. Thus the authoritative scriptures of modern Hinduism are the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Smrties, the Mahabharata, the Brahma Sutras, Purvamimamsa, Sankhyashastra, Yogashastra and the Puranas.

Since the establishment of this religion, there never arose in the Hindu society any revolutionary intellectual movement, leading to a renaissance of Hinduism. There were no important social upheavals either. Numerous empires arose and disappeared, but the general social pattern remained the same. Thus there began the age of a great stagnation. In this age also, there was some progress in poetry, drama, commentaries and science. Towards the end of this long period, *i.e.* in the seventh and the eighth centuries A.D, arose the two leading thinkers namely Kumarila Bhatta and Shankaracharya. The former critically examined the idea of the authority of religion as developed in the Purvamimamsa and proved the various concepts of the monotheists as well as the Jains and the Buddhists to be wrong. He further proved the self-evident authority of the Vedas and thus established a particular method of judging and proving the same. This method dominated the religious thought of the later days so strongly and so well that it has been scrupulously followed by all the scholars in their religious thinking. Kumarila Bhatta wanted to combat the tendencies towards asceticism and renunciation and to establish again the supremacy of the this-worldly laws, the religion of the householders and the Yajna. But he could not succeed in achieving that. The triumph of Shankara defeated that purpose; and Purvamimamsa was put in a subordinate position. It was only the scriptural authority proved by him that charmed all the scholars and even Shankara accepted it. Thus while on the one hand he combatted the notions of omniscience, God, yogic miracles etc., on the other hand by establishing the self-evident scriptural authority of the Vedas, he gave them a strong foundation of blind faith. All these miracles however originated from the Vedas, the Smrties and the Puranas themselves. The secular outlook supported by Kumarila Bhatta was that of the Shruties and Smrties. It was not one founded on rationalism and materialism. It had already become weak and futile centuries ago. The institutions of Yajna and Varna had already lost their meaning. On the other hand, thinking

minds were worried over the poverty and meagreness of social existence. A weak political authority, tyranical Smrti law and the unrestrained domination of the priests, kings and the noblemen all had reduced the existence of productive classes of traders, agriculturists and artisans to a miserable position. The classes, producing wealth, were themselves afflicted by poverty; while the higher classes were generally degraded. Under conditions like these, the thinking section in the community could have no other feeling excepting pessimism. It was stagnation all around. The philosophy of this stagnation was the doctrine of Maya enunciated by Shankara.

The intellectual attainments of Shankara were of the highest order. He examined closely and critically all the different philosophies and doctrines existing in his times and showed, on such examination, the shortcomings of each of them. The result of his criticism was the conclusion, that every interpretation of the Universe or reality proved to be full of fallacies beyond a certain limit. He even established that his own doctrine of Brahma could not be proved logically. Reason, he showed, cannot determine or inform about the nature of the soul, or the doctrine of rebirth. All human thought, in search of Truth in life and the Universe comes to a standstill at a certain stage; and hence the doctrine of Maya. The stagnant position of all thought regarding reality thus proved to be a breeding ground for the doctrine of Maya. The nature of the Universe cannot be described; you cannot say anything either positive, or negative or both ways about it; hence it is illusory. But this illusory nature of the universe could not be proved by Shankara excepting on the authority of the Shruties. Since the Shruties had contended that Brahma alone is the Truth, Shankara could contend that the Universe is an illusion or Maya. Thus the doctrine of Maya enunciated by Shankara, is a result of critical reason accepting its defeat. It is the logical culmination of the Hindu philosophy which could not break the intellectual vicious circle.

Since Shankara could clearly see that the religious institution, the doctrine of Brahma or of Maya could not be established through critical reason, he had to resort to the authority of the Shruties. This simply meant a safe burial of the growing thought and philosophy since the days of the Upanishads under

the crushing weight of scriptural authority. Philosophy is a critical examination of reality by human reason. This continually developing critical understanding was sought to be restrained by the observations in the four Vedas and their authority. Attributing perfection to reason that produced the Vedas, Shankara successfully blocked the way of its further development. This is not surprising. An outstanding intellect like Shankara took this way in the midst of a social atmosphere that had become entirely stagnant. If the environment were ripe for the growth of scientific thinking, the destruction of the cobwebs of old thought and philosophy by Shankara would have led to the rise of a new thought and a new philosophy. A critical examination of all spiritualistic philosophy could not have led to any other results. Either the result would have been the rise of Zeroism, Scepticism and "Maya Vada," or a higher form of rationalism and materialist philosophy. The social environment was not however favourable to the development of science; hence the rise of the doctrine of Maya and the waste of all intellectual effort. When society itself was in a declining and degenerating stage, what could philosophy come to, if not solipsism and dream? All that remained of religion was, therefore, renunciation, surrender to God and devotion. Since the twelfth century, with the break up of the Hindu Empires, Hinduism has simply come to mean the doctrine of Maya, the cult of devotion and the caste system; and it has remained in that form under the Muslim, Maratha and the British rules.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN HINDUISM

An effort to defend the old customs with the help of new sciences has been made by numerous scholars under the British rule and is being made still. This revival of the old traditions and customs is the basis of Indian nationalism; and respect for those traditions is the main constituent of the mental makeup of an average nationalist. Some of these people have attempted to defend the caste system with the help of the modern race theory and we may now briefly examine this defence.

It is argued that the modern classification of mankind into different races is connected with the older classification into Varnas and castes. The argument, however, is wrong. There are attempts being made at present to classify human society into various races on the basis of certain biological features such

as the cephalic index, the shape of the nose, the peculiarities of the face and eyes, colour, blood, height etc. But all these are mostly unconnected traits. For instance, it cannot be said that a person with a peculiar colour will have only a given type of facial or other peculiarities and so on. It is on the other hand being established that all these traits are an outcome of a variety of external and internal factors such as heat, cold, weather, water, food, etc. etc. The best criterion of racial differentiation is the cephalic index. But Franz Boas and other anthropologists have argued that even that undergoes a change within a couple of generations. The other biological traits also have very little to do with the division of Varnas or the castes. It is impossible to fix up one's being Brahmin or Sudra with the help of these biological traits. Nor have they anything to do with the psychological traits of these groups described in the Shruties and the Smrties. The Aryans are generally very proud of their racial superiority, but Aryan civilisation and race have little to do with each other. The people with the Aryan culture are not at all of a homogeneous race ; on the contrary numerous racial groups are found to have that culture. On the other hand, racial similarities can be seen between, for example, the Telugu Brahmins, who have still kept the Vedic traditions alive and the Sudras, the Kalla and Illuva from Kochin. The Brahmins in the south and the coblers in the north have the same racial traits. The Nagar Brahmin from Gujarat, the Kayastha from Bengal and the non-Brahmin from Karnataka appear to come from the same race. It would be quite easy and possible to multiply these illustrations.

Indian society, barring the primitive savage tribes still found in India, indicates racial traits of three mainly different types. The racial groups found in Europe, Central and Western Asia, in Australia and in China are all found here. But this indicates neither a higher nor lower level of culture nor any of the different character traits.

Those who feel proud of this Aryan race, should also remember that there had been in existence numerous civilised communities in the world, when the Aryans were virtually savages. Many of these are still in existence and the history of China, Egypt, Crete, Palestine and others bears out the truth of the above contention. The history of Egypt and central Asia further

shows that those who call themselves Aryans even endeavoured with their savage enthusiasm and force to destroy higher forms of civilisations.

The doctrine of the four Varnas has therefore no relation with that of the races. A change in the means and mode of production helps to bring about a change in culture. A society knowing the use of iron can for example, easily defeat another ignorant of that use, with the help of its superior weapons and thus make the vanquished its slaves. A number of Kshatriyas have become Sudras under the British rule, not because the English were better or higher type of Kshatriyas, but because they had higher and more developed types of weapons. History shows cases of communities knowing the use of the horse having defeated brave members of other communities, ignorant of its use, and conquering them, making them Sudras, becoming Brahmins and Kshatriyas themselves. A change in the social environment has thus made Brahmins or Kshatriyas into Sudras. These changes are a result of the changes in the social or political environment and not of any disappearance of character traits of Varnas or change of Varnas. There is nothing in history to show that the life or doings of the Brahmins or the Sudras are determined by any natural biological traits or factors. Various cultural patterns or traditions can arise in one and the same society, decay and disappear; and this has nothing to do with biological traits. There are thousands possessed of knowledge, control, bravery, capacity to hard and strenuous work, ability to amass wealth and so on. If it is said that learning or control are traits of the Brahmin, courage or bravery of the Kshatriya, ability to amass wealth of the Vaishya, or capacity to hard and strenuous work of the Sudras, there is nothing to show any inherent impossibility of two or more of these virtues being possessed by one and the same person. They are not mutually exclusive. Therefore there is nothing to show any relation whatsoever between the doctrine of the four Varnas and that of the races.

Under the British rule, a number of movements of religious reform have arisen in Hindu society. There has been a vast change in the social life of India owing to the advent of that rule. The Englishman arrived here with new sciences, and a new age of machine and manufacture. He established his domination over the country; a phenomenon which has

fundamentally affected the social life in this country. The Indian thinkers, finding the incompatibility between their traditional ideas and thoughts with the new knowledge, began to reform these. Some of them founded new sects, others carried on a movement of reform. Of the new sects, the more important ones are the Brahmosamaj and the Aryasamaj. Brahmosamaj has very little place for the various beliefs or philosophies. Its main emphasis is on devotion to one God, and observance of the norms of civil behaviour and morality. It is thus a very simple sect, but it could not hold its sway for a long time; and never spread beyond a limited number of urban, educated people. Aryasamaj on the other hand has a considerable influence in the Punjab. It made good headway in the direction of religious reform, especially in northern India. Those who simply took to religious reform, without establishing any sect, can also be divided into two categories. One is that of rational reformers, while the other is that of the spiritualistic religious-minded persons. The former tried to revalue the old customs and traditions in the light of the new knowledge and thus bring about some reforms in the life of the urban middle classes. Abolition of child marriage, remarriage of the widows, the condition of the age of consent, removal of taboos regarding food and the endogamous rules were some of the things mainly emphasised by them. Many of the educated persons from the second group tried to pull the leg of these reformers and attempted to defend the old customs and traditions in their hunt for cheap popularity. The tradition of these spiritualist reformers continues for the last half a century or so. Vivekananda, Ramteertha, Tilak, Gandhi, Dr. Radhakrishnan, all belong to this tradition. They have tried to brighten up through window-dressing the old Hinduism and its philosophy. It is a mistake to call them rational reformers. For they are defenders of divine revelation, yogic vision, reincarnation, and various other mystical doctrines.

The sect of Aryasamaj has arisen on the basis of an acceptance of the authority of the Vedas, but rejecting the religion from the Shruties and Smrties and the Puranas. Even from the Vedas, this sect does not accept the Brahmanas. It has convinced itself that the Mantras alone are the real Veda; for the elaborate rituals in the Brahmanas would not be acceptable in modern times. The founder of this sect, Dayananda has

interpreted the Vedas ; and has given them a monotheistic form. The references to animal sacrifices in Yajnas have been regarded as symbolic. In the eyes of Dayananda, the Vedas have a final and complete authority.

It is a futile attempt to present the old Vedic notions in a modern garb ; and it has been a complete failure in its objective of reviving the out-moded Vedic concepts and giving them a content useful to the modern social existence. Aryasamaj is simply a reaction to Islam. One God, one Veda, one religion cannot be the message of the twentieth century. It is not proper to talk the same language to the Hindus in the present times, because Mohamad gave a similar message to the Arabs in the twelfth century.

There are some who argue that revival of the Vedas alone can lead to the prosperity of the Hindus. The message of the pre-Buddhistic Hinduism will make the Hindus again brave and powerful. It is historically wrong, however, to say that the Hindus became weak and cowardly in the post-Buddhistic period. In that period itself arose three or four important Hindur Empires. There is no historical evidence to show that similar, empires existed before the rise of Buddha. Revival of the Vedic notions, on the other hand, will now further weaken the Hindu for the Vedic thought regarding life and the universe is extremely narrow and illusory. It is only a proper understanding of the laws of the universe and society that can strengthen man ; harbouring illusions regarding these can only contribute to weakness. It is true that there is considerable emphasis in the Vedas on the material aspect of life but there is also a great ignorance regarding the same, underlying the belief that there are various deities in various natural objects and elements, and that they govern the behaviour of nature. There is further the futile ritual of prayers and magic. All this lumber of illusory and wrong notions can be of very little help to us today. It is entirely inconsistent with modern science and thought. The greatness of the Vedas was in the then existent peculiar social conditions and times, which need not better be compared with those of the present. Just as Bhaskaracharya is none the less important because his mathematics appears ridiculously simple when compared with that of the present, so are the Vedas. They or the Upanishads, Gita, and other works have no doubt a great

historical significance, but to make them a guide in modern life is nothing short of a shortsighted policy.

A number of our educated people have been attracted by the secular outlook of the Gita. Important leaders of thought and movements have written commentaries and criticisms of it, trying to find in it a message of new Hinduism. But the main question in this connection would be : Is the thought in Gita to be accepted as an authority or is it to be accepted with the help of reason ? Are the various ideas in that work mutually consistent ? There are various complex problems tackled in that work. But its fundamental tenets of rebirth, a detached soul, God and the doctrine of Karma (or fatalism) cannot be established with the help of reason. Those who therefore have to accept the Gita, must accept these on scriptural authority, unless they have the uncommon audacity to say that they have these as a part of their experience. But how can one, guided by reason, accept these ideas ? Whether the doctrine of Gita is secular or spiritualistic, is a different matter ; its basic tenets will have to be accepted with blind faith. Those who therefore do not want to accept anything on blind faith but wish to be guided by reason, will see that it is impossible to logically establish these fundamentals and they have therefore to be rejected.

The real problems before us today are different. Society is stagnant and problems of its reconstruction so as to open up the way of progress have to be tackled. What can the Gita do in that respect ? Idealistic expressions like spiritual or material well-being have no meaning today. What is needed is a science of social dynamics, social forces and their actions and reactions. The Gita talks of Karma without the desire for its results or fruits. But in fact the criterion of a proper Karma (deed) itself is the effects produced by or the results obtained from it. The deeds regarded as wrong by tradition, have got to be proved to be such by reason. Social sciences, and not the Gita, can help in that respect. The formulations in the Gita are of the type of the Puranas. They are not rigidly logical or balanced and orderly. That order has to be discovered in them ; and they are capable of a variety of interpretations. All this indicates that the Gita can be of very little help to us in this modern scientific age.

Some of the modern scholars do not accept the caste system

and are not proud of it. They do not even accept untouchability or the rules of endogamy or the taboos of food and drink. They have therefore argued that the caste system is not an important feature of Hinduism and have on the other hand tried to find out its higher and nobler characteristics. The attempt has been a failure. Out of these efforts based on certain semi-rational and pseudo-scientific concepts, a new non-existent Hinduism is arising. The present-day social problems are of a profound significance and these superficial remedies cannot tackle them. Under the thin layer of rationalism in these attempts, is concealed blind faith. There is no examination of the roots, of fundamentals. It will never be possible to establish a new spiritualistic religious sect, unless rationalism in the proper sense, is completely rejected; and this plain truth has to be clearly grasped. If a religious sect in a new form is to be established, it can be done only on a scriptural authority. Religion disappears when proper rationalism comes in. Faith in the supernatural is the essence of religion. Both Tilak and Dayananda had recognised that there is no basis for religion excepting authority; and hence the former accepted the Gita and the latter, the Vedas

The learned members of the Dharma Nirnaya Mandala have been trying to erect a new structure of Hinduism based on reason. But any religion must have at its root a faith in the supernatural or it is no religion at all. The rituals prescribed by this Mandala, are thus based upon an acceptance of the deity. These notions pertaining to the deity are not merely symbolic; for false symbols are not needed by man. The authority of these notions is therefore the word of those who claim to have had an actual experience of God. Modern rationalism or healthy experience cannot accept these notions of God, immortality, Brahma, Maya and so on. If purely scriptural authority is not acceptable to the Mandala, it will still have to be said that their prayers and rituals do indicate blind faith. Determination and deep faith (blind) can alone lead to the establishment of a new religion. Various new natural and social sciences have developed in this modern age; and if they are not properly availed of, all efforts in their absence are bound to prove futile and in vain.

There are some who argue that the concepts of God, immortality of the soul or the doctrine of Karma have a value in life. Whether they are true or otherwise, whether they can be established with the help of reason or otherwise, it is not possible to act properly and courageously in life without assuming their correctness and hence that has to be assumed. The value of that assumption consists in making man feel that it is necessary and worthwhile to behave properly. The assumption is thus necessary for social order or social stability.

There are a number of flaws in this argument. In the first place, various outstanding events occur and have occured in history without the aid of these concepts or with that of purely secular values. It is these this-worldly and secular values that have the capacity of developing the various human virtues of learning, selflessness, bravery, heroism and so on. Those who carried out the French Revolution were backed by secular values of liberty, equality and fraternity. In the American war of Independence, people fought for the values of democracy and the fundamental rights of man. In the Spanish civil war, men died on the battlefield for democracy, human rights, destruction of economic slavery and socialism. Where questions of life and death are involved, men have thus fought without any spiritual incentives of God or immortality. The scientist toils in his laboratory day and night, even when he has no faith in God. He works for seeking the truth or may be for love of his work or for his subsistence or for the good of humanity. When the mother works for the child, she does not do so for God or salvation ; but because of her identifying herself with the child. There are very few persons who refuse to see beyond their narrow, purely personal interests. Man has been working for his family ever since ancient times and will continue to work even if he knows that God or immortality do not exist. Even the primitive tribesmen obey the tribal law in the absence of spiritual values. It is only selfishness that again prompts the religious minded person to obey the ethical laws as well as the norms of religion. It is however a perverted selfishness for it is founded on delusions. The various ideals like well-being nationalism, socialism, glory of man are all social, not individual. Individual ends are subordinated in their pursuit ; for they

represent the good, stability and prosperity of the lives of millions of individuals. Materialism which lays emphasis on these ideals is thus definitely a better and higher type of philosophy than spiritualism which stresses the fictitious other-worldly good of individuals.

The other flaw in the argument is its ascribing a permanent value to taboos, sentiments, behaviour and thought born in peculiar historical and social conditions. Religion gives these permanent values a divine sanction ; presents them as a divine message or revelation. These thoughts or behaviour which are important in peculiar surroundings and conditions and which have lost that importance owing to a change in those conditions or surroundings become actually fetters on further progress. It is these permanent values that open up the way for decay and fall. Religion or God created and preserved by man comes to dominate and rule man himself. It is essential therefore that we should hereafter have ideals based on reason and capable of being revalued and changed when they have outlived their utility. The religious values must be rejected.

It may also be pointed out that these so-called spiritual values come under the influence of the dominating classes in society and thus serve as convenient tools in their hands to perpetuate the slavery of the downtrodden. The ruling classes have always used them to maintain their position, their domination and privileges. This will be borne out by the history of all the religions in the world. It is religious values that have preserved the unjust laws of the caste system or untouchability. The mystic spiritual doctrines can be highly useful for attaining vulgar material ends.

It is entirely wrong to imagine that spiritualism is moral, while materialism is immoral. Mystic spiritualism generally is a cover for vulgar materialism, while scientific materialism contains within it a higher type of spiritualism. Spiritualism proper simply should mean the intellectual or mental development of man. Unless the entire society is provided with the means of physical existence, there is little or no scope for the development of art or learning ; unless each one can have the path of progress opened up before him, spiritualism in the proper sense can never arise. This development of the internal and external faculties and abilities of man demands the help of all sciences

and arts, which can be derived only by scientific materialism. Realisation of the higher social ideals and aims is spiritualism.

We have not examined here the two philosophical camps of idealism and materialism ; but simply idealism and materialism in so far as they have a bearing on life. Man is the creater of this life. Its events do not take place due to any divine dispensation. It is not possible to go into a discussion of these two philosophies in this connection.

An intellect possessed of the spirit of inquiry when it views the enormous expanse, subtlety and gravity of the universal natural forces, is filled with a sentiment of reverence. Prof. Max Muller has styled this sentiment as the consciousness of the infinite and has called it the basis of all religion. But this is again not sound. For religious notion is not merely the notion of the infinite, of what is beyond the known, the finite world. There is in it a cobweb of delusions regarding the finite, the known. Heaven, Hell, God, Rebirth, Karma, the day of reckoning, all do not relate to the infinite, the Unknown. It is on the other hand a new imaginary world constructed out of ignorance and llusions to which they relate. These religious notions have arisen out of a distortion of the reality.

The subtle, romantic, enchanting and noble sentiments regarding the Universe that charm the human mind have little to do with the institutional religion which is a part and parcel of society. A traveller on board a ship looking at the vast unending expanse of the ocean or gazing at the starry heavens in the night in a desert may experience these sentiments and emotions. As Einstein has once observed : "It is this mysterious Universe that is the most beautiful of all other things ; and is the origin of all art and science. One may be considered as a dead soul, who does not feel charmed or surprised by it. It is in this sense that I am a religious person." There is a great truth in this observation of Einstein. Kant had also expressed himself similarly when he said that human surprise knew no limits when one gazed at the starry heavens above or looked for the moral law within. This sentiment may be considered as similar to that of the poet but has little to do with heaven and hell, miracles, reincarnations, prophets and so on. Its essence is simply humility in the face of the unknown, unthought of, infinite. But this humility has produced science and not

religion. It encourages the search for truth and keeps on the continual march towards it. Religion, on the other hand, is opposed to this humility. It is marked by arrogance. It has always claimed domination over everything, the Known and the Unknown. It has always been proud of explaining the mysteries of the Universe, rather than being humble when faced with them. Religion never had any respect for the unknown. It has always tried to impress and in doing so, seldom showed any regard for Truth. Barring exceptional cases in the Upanishads and the Darshanas, it has seldom raised the questions of why and how, excepting with a view to impress. It always tried to relate the Universe with the doings and misdoings of the insignificant human being, for it was endeavouring to preserve a given set of interests. Science has demolished this illusion. Astronomy, Geology, Biology, Psychology all have helped to explode this myth.

Man, moving in the light of modern science, is increasingly realising his insignificance. He is like a drop in the ocean. Religion has imagined man to be the centre of the Universe and made eveything in it dependent upon him. It has imagined that behind all the events and happenings in the Universe, there is some scheme, some purpose. It has postulated some creator who has devised the scheme, or possessed that purpose.

Man, in this age of science, is rejecting this religious thought and substituting in its place a new scientific outlook. In his view, this earth came into being sometime due to the operation of the laws of the Universe. Life and man arose on it in course of time under suitable conditions. He has been since then engaged in a struggle with the world around him and has been trying to harness its forces to his own purposes ; and is becoming increasingly successful in the effort. He is thus emerging from the anthropomorphic age into the scientific one. He no longer imagines the world to be what he wants it to be. He is on the contrary trying to conquer the forces around him, knowing well that what is unknown is infinitely greater than what is known. He has become more self-reliant, more confident of himself as a creator. He no longer holds God or fate responsible for the evils of poverty, inequality, starvation, ignorance, injustice and so on ; but ascribes the responsibility to the social order.

Problems insoluble are pretended to be solved by religion, which simply leads to self-deception. Man with a scientific outlook, will not be a party to such deception but will frankly admit his inability to solve them. The realm of knowledge is continually expanding; and it is needless therefore to rely on fantastic imaginary explanations. It is possible for him to bring heaven on earth with the help of science and reason rather than go on indulging in delusions regarding heaven and hell. The struggle thus for a reconstruction of the social order has already begun. The enormous amount of social energy hitherto directed in defending religion can now usefully be canalised in this direction. The goal of human activity hereafter would therefore be the construction of a social order full of life, vigour, energy, vitality and happiness.

Social institutions, higher than religion are being brought into being today. And society is now endeavouring to create means and institutions which would perform far more skillfully and on a much higher level, the role religion once performed in human history. A social order, unknown to all religions, is now a necessity; an order that will provide to all opportunities for full development of themselves.

These new ideals are simply a development of the old ones. Vyasa regarded human life or the social order as of primary significance and subordinated everything else to it, including the so called permanent moral values. Buddha gave again man the central position. Philosophers from the Vedic period to Shankara kept the search for Truth going. We have all this great heritage. Assimilating it well, let us discharge our responsibility of creating a social existence which never existed before. Those who continually look to the past, while acting in the present, can have no future. It is only the new ideals and the new means of attaining them belonging to the new times, that can brighten up posterity. You cannot climb up to the glory of the future unless the past is made just a step on the way.

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